

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON, URBAN RENEWAL AREA
Bounded by Independence Avenue, Washington Avenue, South
Capitol Street, Canal Street, P Street, Maine Avenue &
Washington Channel, Fourteenth Street, D Street, & Twelfth Street
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS DC-856
DC-856

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON, D.C., URBAN RENEWAL AREA

HABS No. DC-856

- Location: Southwest Washington, District of Columbia. The urban renewal area encompassed most, but not all, of the Southwest quadrant. Its ultimate boundaries included the following: Independence Avenue on the north, between Twelfth Street and Washington Avenue (formerly Canal Street); Washington Avenue on the northeast, between Independence Avenue and D Street; South Capitol Street on the east, between D and M streets; Canal Street on the southeast, between M and P streets; P Street on the south, between Canal Street and Maine Avenue; Maine Avenue and the Washington Channel on the southwest, between P and Fourteenth streets; Fourteenth Street on the west, between D and F streets; D Street on the northwest, between Fourteenth and Twelfth streets; and Twelfth Street, between D Street and Independence Avenue, to the origin.
- Time Period: Approximately 1945-73. While related events occurred prior to this time period, this history marks the start of Southwest's urban renewal with the Redevelopment Act of 1945, which created the D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA) and initiated the process of urban renewal in Washington, D.C. In 1950, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPPC) published a Comprehensive Plan, which identifies the Southwest as a "problem area" in need of redevelopment. At the end of 1952, with the passage of the first urban renewal plan for a Southwest project area (area B), urban renewal moved from the planning to action stage. In late 1953, the RLA began property acquisition, and relocation started shortly thereafter. The demolition of approximately 4,800 structures in the area began in spring 1954. While the urban renewal plans were in effect for forty years, the vast majority of the construction – including that of all of the residential communities – was completed by 1970. Also at this time, public and governmental attention shifted away from the Southwest area to a second Washington, D.C., urban renewal project, located in a portion of Northwest. By 1973, virtually all of the originally planned development was complete. The focus of this report is on the buildings and sites within the Southwest urban renewal area that were constructed, renovated, or otherwise impacted during this time period.
- Present Owner: Multiple organizations and individuals own property within the Southwest urban renewal area today. The largest among these include the Federal government, housing cooperatives, and private real estate developers, including JBG Companies, Kaempfer Company, and Forest City Enterprises.

Present Use: The area includes all streets and avenues, parks, buildings, objects, and open space within the Southwest urban renewal area. These entities are presently put to a variety of land uses, primarily including transportation, residential space, community space (including schools, parks, theaters, and other services), commercial space (including offices and retail), and government (Federal and D.C.) office buildings.

Significance: Southwest Washington, D.C., was the site of one of the earliest urban renewal efforts in the United States, and the first such renewal effort in the Nation's Capital. While not the largest urban renewal project ever pursued in the District, it was the city's only full-scale and most comprehensive attempt to redevelop an entire neighborhood.¹

Over the course of roughly two decades of execution from the early 1950s to the early 1970s, the urban renewal of Southwest displaced approximately 1,500 businesses and 23,000 residents, or almost 6,000 families, from 560 acres of land that had formerly been occupied by some of the worst slum conditions and alley dwellings in the city. By the timing of its rough completion, it had replaced these with approximately 13,000 middle and upper class residents living in approximately 5,800 new units of housing, which consisted of individually owned and rented units, cooperatives, and condominiums. These dwellings were arranged in complexes of Modernist high-rises and townhouses, interspersed between communal residential squares. In addition to residential structures, the new Southwest also included a Town Center with a suburban shopping center, a revived waterfront, a Federal employment center, a public plaza and promenade, highways, a theater, and other community facilities.

While neither the first nor the largest urban renewal project in the nation, at the time of its initiation, the urban renewal of Southwest was the largest such effort yet undertaken in the U.S.² and the largest "close-in" project yet undertaken close to a downtown area.³ The amount of land acquired was also one of the largest yet acquired by the U.S. Government,⁴ and its plans – although not fully realized – represented the most comprehensive and ambitious approach to urban redevelopment in the nation.

Southwest's urban renewal takes on a certain degree of national significance simply given its location in the Nation's Capital. In addition, as an early pioneer and intended prototype in national urban renewal, it

¹ Keith Melder, *City of Magnificent Intentions: A History of Washington, District of Columbia*, 2nd Edition (Washington, D.C.: Intac, 1997), 525.

² District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency, *Annual Report*, 1959, 1.

³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1965, 1; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 8.

⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 5.

helped test and set national standards and policy. For example, the project was the site of the historic Supreme Court case *Berman v. Parker*, which upheld the legality of eminent domain. The project was among the first to pioneer new housing practices, such as the development of the first FHA-funded housing cooperative; establishment of the first racially integrated private apartment buildings in Washington, D.C. – a legal requirement throughout the project; incorporation of design competitions into the commissioning of urban renewal structures; mixing of varied housing types – including apartment buildings and row houses – in single developments; and placement of emphasis on – and obtainment of FHA insurance for – landscape and community “amenities,” in addition to residential buildings alone.

The project also put into practice the pre-Housing Act of 1954 preference for redevelopment over rehabilitation, whereby the process of urban renewal in Southwest razed over 99 percent of the buildings in the project area.⁵ Finally, as historian Howard Gillette has argued, “although some claim has been made for Chicago as establishing the precedent for redevelopment under largely private direction as supervised by local planning agencies, Congress’s intimate involvement in setting a policy for the District of Columbia made Washington the true test of future policy.”⁶

Architectural design also contributes to making Southwest’s urban renewal what author James M. Goode calls in his catalog of Washington, D.C., apartment buildings, “the most important urban renewal project in the country.”⁷ This assessment owes its due not only to the importance of the city of Washington, D.C., but also to the employment of many Modernist architectural and planning ideals – such as the implementation of the superblock, and the attention paid to the separation of automobile and pedestrian space – in the Southwest rebuilding process. Many prominent local and national architects of the Modernist movement were also personally involved with incorporating these ideals into the design of the new Southwest. Thus, the completed sites include residential buildings by I.M. Pei, Chloethiel Woodard Smith, Charles Goodman, and Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon; Federal buildings by Edward Durrell Stone, Marcel Breuer, Herbert Beckhard, Holabird & Root, and Curtis & David; landscapes by Dan Kiley and Sasaki, Dawson & DeMay; a theater by

⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 8.

⁶ Howard Gillette, Jr., *Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington D.C.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 150.

⁷ James M. Goode, *Best Addresses: A Century of Washington’s Distinguished Apartment Houses* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), quoted in Design Research, *Southwest Survey Phase III: Historic Context Narrative, Report Submitted to D.C. Historic Preservation Office* (Washington, D.C.: n.p., [1997]), 49.

Harry Weese; and a hotel by Lapidus, Harle & Liebman. Today, the area serves as a veritable living museum of the Modernist style, offering visitors the unusual opportunity to “view such a variety of architectural solutions to essentially the same problem, constructed in such a relatively concentrated area, over such a short period of time.”⁸

From a global perspective, in the midst of project execution, the Redevelopment Land Agency called the Southwest “the largest peacetime reconstruction of a section of a city ever to be undertaken anywhere.”⁹ It received international attention through the inclusion of maps and models from one of its project areas in an exhibition at the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels.¹⁰ Moreover, numerous world leaders were able to track progress in the area as the Redevelopment Land Agency and U.S. Presidents provided tours to visiting dignitaries from around the world.

Despite the national and international significance of the practices and site, as well as the prominence of the architects and planners involved, the realized New Southwest did not live up to the grand vision its developers had in mind. Consequently, today, many of the hallmark sites of the urban renewal plan – including L’Enfant Plaza, the Waterside Mall, and the waterfront – are marked for redevelopment. These plans, along with other smaller-scale developer initiatives, threaten to significantly alter, or even destroy, some of the urban renewal era buildings and sites. However, at the same time, they also offer hope of remedying some of the failures of urban renewal planning and execution and of improving the neighborhood’s shortcomings for today’s residents, workers, and visitors.

Historian: Francesca Russello Ammon, Summer 2004

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⁸ Quoted in Design Research, 48.

⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 1.

¹⁰ Robert G. Howes, *Crisis Downtown: A Church Eye-view of Urban Renewal*, Public Edition (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Charities, December 1959), Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, 2.

Kress Tompkins fellowship committee, and consisted of written history and large format photographs. The documentation was produced by Francesca Russello Ammon (Yale University), winner of the Sally Kress Tompkins fellowship and the project historian, and by James Rosenthal, HABS Photographer, during the summer of 2004.

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I. Introduction

Context

Urban Renewal

In the publication *20 Questions & Answers on Urban Renewal*, the Urban Renewal Administration (URA) of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) defines urban renewal as “the official program of a community to improve itself through the elimination of slums and blight and the removal of the causes of slum and blighted areas, thereby preventing their recurrence.” The publication notes that urban renewal is both a public and private undertaking that has the potential to modernize an area’s physical character and remedy “poor housing, traffic congestion, inadequate sites for commercial and industrial growth, decay of downtown areas, and neighborhood deterioration.”¹¹

While urban renewal in the United States is generally associated with the middle decades of the twentieth century, the process of urban redevelopment has been going on for as long as cities have been reinventing their urban cores. This includes many of the redevelopment efforts in European cities following the World Wars, and also the redevelopment of the old buildings of Washington, D.C.’s Federal Triangle in the 1920s and 1930s.¹² However, urban renewal did not become national policy in the United States until the mid-twentieth century. At that time, many American cities were experiencing similar problems, including the flight of affluent, largely white citizens to the suburbs, and the growing concentration of poor, largely black citizens in the decaying urban centers. As the middle and upper class sped out of the cities in their automobiles, they took with them the taxes and commercial expenditures that had previously gone to the urban areas. Looking to reverse this trend and nourish their bank accounts, cities turned to urban renewal as a way to entice the refugees from the upper socioeconomic group to return.

In the mid- to late-1940s, Congress passed the first pieces of legislation that would enable urban renewal in Washington, D.C. Even prior to that time, however, several non-legislative movements started the ball rolling in the Nation’s Capital toward urban renewal. Foremost among these were the movements associated with the eradication of alley dwellings and the development of war housing.

Alley Dwellings

As historian Howard Gillette, Jr., aptly points out, the story of Washington, D.C.’s urban renewal dates back to the early efforts to eliminate alley dwellings – the makeshift, and often unsanitary housing that sprung up in the alleys between buildings, creating slum-like conditions.

¹¹ [United States] Urban Renewal Administration and [United States] Housing and Home Finance Agency, *20 Questions & Answers on Urban Renewal* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1963), Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, 2.

¹² Melder, *City of Magnificent Intentions*, 520.

Such efforts can be traced back as long ago as 1892, when Congress allocated \$20,000 to investigate slum conditions in cities with populations over 200,000.¹³

John Ihlder was one of the early housing advocates in the campaign against alley dwellings. Ihlder criticized alley dwellings as unsanitary, hidden breeding grounds for anti-social practices. Moreover, in the context of increasing urban congestion, Ihlder argued that the sites of alley dwellings might be put to better use than their current low-income residential functions.¹⁴

In 1934, the Capper-Norton Alley Dwelling Bill, or the Alley Dwelling Act, was passed, creating the Washington, D.C.'s Alley Dwelling Authority (ADA). The act empowered the ADA with the ability to condemn and convert alley property for private or community use, making the group the country's first local housing authority.¹⁵ In 1943, the ADA's name was changed to the National Capital Housing Authority, and its obligations expanded to include slum reclamation and low-rent housing.¹⁶ No longer just a slum clearing agency, then, the Authority was also responsible for creating conditions outside of slum areas that would adequately house former slum residents.

Thus, through the growing efforts to abolish alley dwellings, the Southwest, the site of one of the major alley dwelling concentrations in Washington, D.C., began receiving the attention of planners, housing advocates, and the government.

War Housing

Another force that influenced the alley dwelling discussion was World War II. Both before and after the United States' entry into the war, the country was building up its defenses, and a housing crisis – an impediment to production¹⁷ – developed. In 1941, the Defense Housing Coordinator, Charles F. Palmer, even went so far as to call the District the nation's leading housing problem. Thus, discussions commenced regarding the development of new housing in and around the District – in Arlington, VA, and the Southeast and Southwest quadrants of Washington, D.C.¹⁸ War housing was one of the responsibilities of the ADA, and so they were heavily involved in these discussions as well.¹⁹

The 1942 report, *The Rehabilitation of Southwest Washington as a War Housing Measure, A Memorandum to the Federal Home Loan Bank Board*, written by Arthur Goodwillie, in conjunction with John Ihlder, the Washington Housing Association, Howard University

¹³ U.S. URA and HHFA, 14.

¹⁴ Gillette, 136-137.

¹⁵ Ibid., 139.

¹⁶ U.S. National Capital Park and Planning Commission (U.S. NCPPC), *Housing and Redevelopment; A Portion of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and its Environs* (Washington, D.C.: [U.S. Government Printing Office], 1950), 26.

¹⁷ Arthur Goodwillie, *The Rehabilitation of Southwest Washington as a War Housing Measure, A Memorandum to the Federal Home Loan Bank Board* [Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1942], 2.

¹⁸ Gillette, 144-145.

¹⁹ U.S. NCPPC, *Housing and Redevelopment*, 26.

faculty, and the District Commissioners, laid out the case for developing war housing in Southwest. This proposal advocated building war housing in a nine-block area of the quadrant bounded by First and P streets, Maine Avenue, and the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks.²⁰ This location was deemed appropriate because of its close proximity to Federal jobs in that area, as well as the cost savings it offered through the reuse of “sound but substandard existing residential structures and public works.”²¹ In addition, such redevelopment would have the added benefit of destroying one of the city’s largest slums “without direct expenditure.”²²

Although many black residents of Southwest opposed this proposed eviction of their neighborhood, the ultimate obstacle to prevent realization of Goodwillie’s proposal was its inability to secure the necessary funding from Congress.²³ Nevertheless, the local housing data collected – and the anti-slum case it was used to construct – would endure in the continuing saga leading up to eventual redevelopment of the Southwest.

Old Southwest

Early History in Brief

As historian Keith Melder writes in his chapter-long history of the area, “The Southwest Washington neighborhood represents a paradox: it is at the same time one of the city’s oldest and one of its newest sections.”²⁴ While urban renewal makes it one of the newest District neighborhoods, its settlement in the late seventeenth century and incorporation into Washington, D.C., in 1790 make it an elder of the area.

Some of its earliest usage, dating back to the development of the L’Enfant Plan, was as a military outpost, strategically located along the Potomac River to protect the Federal city from invasions. This explains the present location of Fort Lesley J. McNair. Speculative real estate developers recognized other advantages in Southwest’s location as well, viewing its proximity to the waterfront and city center as draws for residential development. James Greenleaf was foremost among these speculators,²⁵ and some of his real estate projects still survive in the neighborhood.

The African American population particularly congregated in the area, with the Southwest serving as a popular home for free blacks, as well as a major stop along the Underground Railroad. Blacks continued to populate the area after the war, inhabiting row houses in the alleys. These alley dwellings typically lacked sanitation and other basic amenities.

²⁰ Goodwillie, 15.

²¹ Ibid., 11.

²² Ibid., 8.

²³ Gillette, 145-146.

²⁴ Keith Melder, “Southwest Washington: Where History Stopped,” in Kathryn Schneider Smith, Ed., *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of the Neighborhoods in the Nation’s Capital* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1988), 65.

²⁵ Ibid., 66.

Despite these poor physical conditions, however, the area is said to have developed a strong sense of community that endured through the beginning of urban renewal. The next significant wave of settlers to join this community was European immigrants, who began arriving in the 1880s. While blacks and whites coexisted in the Southwest, Fourth Street (then 4 ½ Street) physically divided them.²⁶

Melder describes the years between 1895 and 1930 as the Southwest's "golden years." During this period, the population peaked at around 35,000, community institutions thrived, and most residents were able to find gainful employment right in their home area. Following this climactic time, the population began falling, the penetration of African Americans within that population increased, and government buildings began encroaching upon the area.²⁷

When cities across the country began trying to come to terms with white flight to the suburbs and the accompanying decline of urban populations and rise of blighted living conditions, Southwest was right in the thick of this nationwide trend. Despite a history of isolation from the rest of the city – first by the building of the Washington City Canal in 1815 (which was then filled in and today serves as Constitution Avenue), and later by the construction of railroad tracks²⁸ – the poor conditions in Southwest by the mid-twentieth century made it virtually impossible for Washingtonians and the Federal government to ignore it any longer.

Pre-Renewal Conditions

Population

The 1950 census – the last census completed prior to Southwest's urban renewal – reported a population of 23,416 persons, or 5,974 families, living in the portion of the Southwest that would become the urban renewal area.²⁹ This level was slightly less than population reported in the 1940 census. Prior to this time period, population in the overall quadrant had been increasing.³⁰ The vast majority, or 69 percent, of this population was black, and the rest was white.³¹ In those areas targeted for initial renewal, the concentration of black residents was even higher.

The distribution of this population within the Southwest was particularly dense. While densities varied throughout the approximately 300 acres of the 1951 survey area, they generally exceeded comfortable levels given the typical building heights of 2-3 stories. Although densities

²⁶ Ibid., 67.

²⁷ Ibid., 68.

²⁸ Goode, 406.

²⁹ Calculated based on sum of conditions in Area B, Area C, and Area C-1 as of 1956 boundaries; United States National Capital Planning Commission, *Urban Renewal Plan; Southwest Urban Renewal Project Area C: A Report of Existing Conditions and a Plan for Urban Renewal; Adopted on April 5, 1956 by the National Capital Planning Commission*. ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., 1956), Appendix A3.

³⁰ United States National Capital Planning Commission, *Redevelopment Plan; Southwest Redevelopment Project, Area B; A report of Existing Conditions and a Plan for Development Adopted on October 24, 1952* (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1952), 2.

³¹ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix A3.

of 25-35 dwelling units per acre were considered reasonable maximums, very few sections had densities lower than 25 dwelling units per acre. Moreover, the four corners of the survey area exhibited densities exceeding 45 units per acre.³²

While technically not representative of the entire survey area, a study of a sample of the residents who would be relocated from Southwest's largest project area yields indicators of several other demographic traits. For example, although there was a very high incidence of absentee landlords, the residents of Southwest were not a transient population: only 0.7 percent had been in the District for under a year, 82 percent had been there for more than ten years, and 65 percent had been in Southwest for more than ten years.³³ Some other relevant statistics are included in the table below:³⁴

³² Harland Bartholomew & Associates, *Redevelopment Plans for the Southwest Survey Area in the District of Columbia; Prepared Under the Direction of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission for the District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency*. (St. Louis: n.p., May 1952), 3.

³³ Daniel Thursz, *Where Are They Now? A Study of the Impact of Relocation on Former Residents of Southwest Washington, Who Were Served in an HWC Demonstration Project* ([Washington, D.C.]: Health and Welfare Council of the National Capital Area, 1966), 19.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21-23.

Percent of Sample in July 1959

Family Type:	
Single, unrelated	22 percent
1 or 2 parents, plus child	54 percent
Employment/Occupation:	
Low Income	88 percent
Head of household employed	48 percent
Of employed head, unskilled occupation	86 percent
Religion:	
Head is Protestant	68 percent
Head is Catholic	14 percent
Never attend church	16 percent
Education of Head:	
1-6 years	41 percent
7-12 years	39 percent
Above grade 12	2 percent
Health:	
Head disabled	28 percent
Others disabled	15 percent
Relatives:	
In Southwest	28 percent
In D.C.	41 percent

Land Use

The majority of the land use in the old Southwest was concentrated in streets, alleys, and residential use. The complete land use distribution – for the original 427-acre area, as well as the later extended area of approximately 600 acres (an figure which included the public housing areas) – was as follows:

	<u>427-Acre Area (1953)³⁵</u>	<u>600-Acre Area (1956)³⁶</u>
Vacant	1 percent	2 percent
Residential	31 percent	25 percent
Public and Semi-Public	9 percent	10 percent
Commercial	5 percent	5 percent
Industrial	9 percent	12 percent
Streets and Alleys	44 percent	47 percent

³⁵ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 3.

³⁶ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 9.

This land use was generally distributed across the area as follows:

Industrial uses are found along the railroad on the northern boundary of the Survey Area, scattered along Maine Avenue, and at scattered locations in the interior of the Survey Area. Commercial uses are concentrated along Fourth Street, on Seventh Street, and along Maine Avenue. Public and semi-public uses are found here and there throughout the area.³⁷

Numerous commercial enterprises in the area offered employment opportunities to the residents. These included wholesale food markets, restaurants, lumberyards, and the Capital Transit Company's car barns and bus repair shop. Just outside the quadrant, but still within walking distance, employment opportunities also existed in the city's central business district, Union Station, the Naval Gun Factory, and Federal offices. Overall, almost 90 percent of the employed persons in the area worked within the District of Columbia, and three-eighths worked in the Southwest or in the Northwest section, south of Florida Avenue and west of Rock Creek.³⁸

As already discussed, Southwest was a prime target for urban renewal largely due to its substandard living conditions. These conditions provided some of the most poignant statistics for purposes of making a case for renewal. A 1951 Redevelopment Land Agency survey of the 64 blocks, or 300 acres, of the proposed Southwest Urban Renewal Area surveyed the housing conditions at the time. Based on an exterior inspection, the Agency graded structures as good, dilapidated, or obsolete. They defined these gradings as follows:

DILAPIDATED: A building is dilapidated because of one or more critical deficiencies, a combination of minor deficiencies, or inadequate original construction. Because of either determination or inadequate construction, dilapidated buildings are below the generally accepted minimum standard for housing and should be torn down, or extensively repaired or rebuilt.

OBSOLESCE: A building is obsolescent when it is not dilapidated, but it is so because of one or more of the following: (1) appears to have a useful life of less than 20 years without substantial renovation, and a number of minor deficiencies insufficient to classify the structure as dilapidated; (2) a style of architecture indicating construction prior to 1910 and no evidence of substantial renovation; (3) obvious defects in layout resulting in a lack of light and air and inadequate living space. Obsolescent buildings must be surveyed individually to determine whether they should be retained or eliminated in the redevelopment plan.

³⁷ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 4.

³⁸ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 9.

GOOD: A building is good when it is sound in all respects and is neither dilapidated or [sic] obsolescent. Good buildings would be retained in the redevelopment site plan.³⁹

In their survey, they determined that, of the 3,370 buildings in the area, only 4 percent were in good condition, while 40 percent were obsolescent and 56 percent were blighted. 87 percent of the buildings in the survey area were residential, with an average of 4.75 persons living in each dwelling unit.⁴⁰ These buildings were generally more than a half-century-old, constructed of brick, and consisted of two stories, with first floors at grade and no basements. Although designed as single-family homes, many now accommodated multiple households.⁴¹ The alley dwellings were also constructed of brick, but were smaller than the street-front dwellings.⁴²

A later survey by the RLA further classified the dwellings in the subsection of the area that would be designated as the first urban renewal parcel – Project Area B. Of the area’s approximately 1,000 residential structures, they classified 80 percent as substandard. (According to the American Public Health Association’s Housing Appraisal Technique, upon which this survey was based, structures should be replaced when more than half of a block’s dwelling units are substandard.⁴³) More specifically, they found that 58 percent of the dwelling units’ toilets were located outside the building (and only 31 percent had toilets inside the dwelling unit), 60 percent had no baths, 31 percent had no indoor running water (only approximately half of those with indoor supplies had hot water), 29 percent were without electricity,⁴⁴ and 84 percent had no central heating.⁴⁵ While Area B’s conditions were particularly extreme, they were indicative of the general level of living conditions in the entirety of Southwest.

Arthur Goodwillie’s 1942 survey of the general Southwest area as a potential war housing location offered less quantitative, but equally telling, description:

Inside bathrooms, kitchen sinks, central heating and electric lights are luxuries of extreme rarity. Many rooms lack adequate sunlight. With few exceptions, sanitary facilities are installed in the back yard, close to the hydrant from which a dozen families draw their domestic water supply. Service alleys are often littered with garbage and other waste. Interspersed among these brick dwellings is a considerable number of older frame houses. The latter are in a lamentable state of repair, dangerous, unhealthful, vermin and rat infested. They constitute a serious fire, safety and health hazard and should be demolished, as a slum clearance measure, at an early date.⁴⁶

³⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1951, 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴¹ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 7.

⁴² Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 3.

⁴³ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 7.

⁴⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, 13.

⁴⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1953, v.

⁴⁶ Goodwillie, 10.

The majority of the Southwest urban renewal area's units, or 87 percent, were tenant-occupied.⁴⁷ Generally speaking, those structures in the worst conditions tended to be tenant-occupied. The owners had little incentive to maintain the structures either given that the mortgage structure of the buildings' sales led to many maintaining only a very small level of equity in their property.

On the flip side, as the statistics also indicated, certain pockets of the Southwest included adequate housing. These were largely concentrated in the southeast corner of the area and took the form of public housing and some relatively new flats and apartment buildings.⁴⁸

Rationale for Urban Renewal in Southwest

A lengthy list has been posed of potential reasons behind the decision to redevelop the Southwest. These range from charges of racist attitudes toward the predominantly black population of the area, to a more academic and architectural desire to practice the ideals of Modernism in the United States. However, as with much real estate development, one of the most significant stimuli was the economic rationale. In addition, more symbolic justifications related to the neighborhood's juxtaposition with the Capitol Building also played a key role.

Symbolism of the Capital

Washington, D.C., plays a very important and symbolic role in the United States. In many ways, it is the public face of the nation – a city visited by many foreign dignitaries, and a shared hometown for all Americans. Thus, the city's visual and functional excellence takes on greater importance than they would in a more typical city.

The National Capital Parks and Planning Commission's (NCPPC) *Comprehensive Plan* of 1950 confirmed this role in its volume *Housing and Redevelopment*. The authors wrote:

As the National Capital, Washington must shelter its inhabitants satisfactorily and conveniently as well as accommodate working places for its people and furnish a suitable setting for the seat of government. The manner in which these separate functions are performed is the city's measure of success as a metropolis. A condition wherein people are ill-housed is not fitting to the character of the city that is this Nation's Capital.⁴⁹

President Harry S. Truman echoed this sentiment in his endorsement of the Plan, noting that Washington, D.C., "should be the best planned city in the world and a Capital befitting the dignity and ideals of a great nation in a family of nations."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1954, 11.

⁴⁸ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 7.

⁴⁹ U.S. NCPPC, *Housing and Redevelopment*, 2.

⁵⁰ U.S. NCPPC, *Washington Present and Future; A General Summary of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and its Environs* (Washington, D.C.: [U.S. Govt. Print. Off.], 1950), 2.

Others broadened this attitude beyond housing alone to encompass all of the architecture of the city. In a special issue of the *A.I.A. Journal* devoted to the architecture and planning of Washington, President John F. Kennedy wrote:

A nation's capital should embody the finest in its contemporary architectural thought. Its architectural form should reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of our national government. In these objectives both public agencies and private builders will need the services of the nation's leading architects.⁵¹

In that same issue, Henry L. Wright further elaborated:

Washington is the face of America. The architecture of its educational institutions, hospitals, churches and commercial enterprises cannot be expected to do less than express the best we have to offer . . . Slums and substandard structures are blemishes that must be eradicated if Washington is to stand as the seat of a government that has won and must maintain the regard and respect of every member of the family of nations.⁵²

With the slums of Southwest located only blocks away from one of that city's grand monuments – the Capitol Building – the majestic image of Washington, D.C., was compromised. Many Congressmen were given tours of the area to see the poverty and deprivation of their neighbor first hand, and others were able to envision the conditions based upon poignant photographs that pictured the Capitol Dome in the background of an alley dwelling scene. Thus, the incongruity of this juxtaposition was cemented, and the rise in public and media attention on the city, in accompaniment with the city's Sesquicentennial celebration in 1950, only further disseminated that disconnect.

The desire to improve Washington, D.C., was further consistent with an urban clean-up trend in various parts of the world at that time. As after previous wars, the end of World War II provided an ideal opportunity to improve the city. Having been ravaged by an influx of war-time workers and their associated temporary quarters and employment facilities, Washington, D.C., was ripe for renewal, just as it had been following other conflicts, like the Civil War. Thus, similar to many European cities during this time period, Washington, D.C., set to work in repairing its infrastructure and appearance.⁵³

Beyond being the public face of the country, Washington, D.C., was also viewed as an appropriate pilot case for demonstrating the potential of large-scale urban renewal for all blighted cities in the nation. As President Kennedy wrote, "The expanding partnership between the Federal government and our cities finds common ground in these ideals and much of our effort is devoted to giving them expression. As our Capital City, Washington should lead in this

⁵¹ John F. Kennedy, "A Message from the President," *Washington in Transition*, (Washington, D.C.: *A.I.A. Journal* 39, January 1963), 25.

⁵² Henry L. Wright, "The Architect and Washington," *Washington in Transition*, 24.

⁵³ "Blueprint for a Greater Washington," *New York Times*, 9 June 1946, quoted in Design Research, 10.

important work.”⁵⁴ Albert Cole, Administrator of the HHFA, also called Southwest’s urban renewal “a signpost and symbol for the rest of the country.”⁵⁵

Not only was the city symbolically suited to leading the charge, but it also was equipped with many of the necessary tools to best facilitate its success in “the war on blight.” As the city’s urban renewal consultant, James W. Rouse, noted, these tools included “an outstanding board of commissioners, a cooperative spirit among city department heads, good basic laws with progress being made on weak spots, a top-notch planning commission, and an established long-range public works program.”⁵⁶

Within Washington, D.C., the Southwest area was particularly appropriate for urban renewal given its proximity to the Capitol and its level of deterioration. In addition, it was also well suited given its defined boundaries, its relatively large size – large enough to discourage organized opposition – and high concentration of poor, black residents, whose voices could be ignored.

Economic Case

In the mid-twentieth century, the combined growth of interstate highways and affordable, private suburban housing contributed to a move out of the cities and into the suburbs across the country. Thus, formerly vibrant downtown areas were emptying, and cities were losing out on tax revenues as their former residents and visitors fled to the hinterlands. This national trend affected the District of Columbia as well, and the city looked to urban renewal as an opportunity to reverse this movement and rejuvenate the urban core.

Southwest offered a particularly attractive site for this type of urban renewal as its location – right next to the Capitol and the central business district on the north and the waterfront on the south – could be highly desirable to would-be suburban commuters. Moreover, the current value of this land was considerably lower than that of other close-in areas of the city,⁵⁷ making the potential economic increment even greater.

As policy scholar Martin Anderson notes in his analysis of the Federal urban renewal program, the promise of increased tax revenue has been one of the greatest motivators of urban renewal activity in the United States.⁵⁸ Since the Federal government subsidized two-thirds of the cost of the project, proponents of urban renewal argued that, in order to break even, the increased taxes would only have to cover the one-third share of the financing for which the local district was responsible. Anything beyond that would be profit. In Southwest, the RLA reported

⁵⁴ Kennedy, 25.

⁵⁵ “Project to Erase Washington Slum.” *New York Times*, 8 January 1957, quoted in Design Research, 10-11.

⁵⁶ Robert C. Albrook, “Expert Tells of Weapons in Slum War,” *Washington Post*, 20 October 1954.

⁵⁷ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 9.

⁵⁸ Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer: A Critical Analysis of Urban Renewal, 1949-1962* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, [1964]), 9.

in its 1961 annual report that this breakeven would occur in less than six years.⁵⁹ It further held that “the ultimate tax return from this Area, after equalizing assessments and tax rates, is expected to exceed five times the revenue received prior to its renewal.”⁶⁰ By 1971, for example, in comparison to the area’s \$592,016 tax intake in 1953,⁶¹ the year prior to the start of urban renewal activity, the area contributed \$3,887,000 to the tax register.⁶²

While annual tax streams certainly increased, however, Anderson argues that the more accurate economic calculation should also take into account the time value of money, lost revenue from the period when the land was barren, redevelopment costs, and any natural improvements in the value of the property in order to arrive at the true economic benefit or loss.⁶³ In addition, he contends that urban renewal is unlikely to contribute little more than a slight net increase in a city’s economics given that experts estimate that more than half of urban renewal buildings would have been built elsewhere in the city anyway.⁶⁴

In rebuttal, it can perhaps be argued that Washington, D.C., is in a somewhat unique position as the Nation’s Capital. As the RLA noted in its 1961 annual report, “The city’s boundaries are limited by law and much of the area of the city is occupied by Federal buildings and land and by private tax-exempt organizations. Redevelopment offers one of the best methods for enhancing the value of the taxable property in the city.”⁶⁵

Proponents of urban renewal argued that the current inhabitants of Southwest also contributed to an imbalance in terms of tax intake versus service expenses such that the area produced “only 1.2 cents of every D.C. tax dollar, but [consumed] at least 34 cents of every dollar spent for welfare, health, mental patients and incarceration of criminals.”⁶⁶ While Anderson does not debate such statistics, he contests that the implied implications are in error, given that simply moving people from one neighborhood to another does not necessarily change their behavior, nor does it diminish the number of police and fire workers on the city payroll.⁶⁷ No comprehensive study has been conducted in the Southwest to determine if any net change in service costs was achieved.

Another economic rationale noted by the RLA was the boost to the economy offered by construction wages and equipment. In Southwest, the RLA estimated the total economic boost, including incremental taxes, at \$450 million. At a point in time – in 1961, for example – this included the economic impact of 1,156 construction workers, earning a collective \$156,600

⁵⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 13.

⁶⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 3.

⁶¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 27.

⁶² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, 20.

⁶³ Anderson, 170-171.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 13.

⁶⁶ Federal City Council (FCC), Washington, D.C. Press Release, “News from ... Federal City Council,” 14 May 1956, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, 0.

⁶⁷ Anderson, 169-170.

weekly pay.⁶⁸ Still, in his more general study, Anderson minimized the magnitude of such benefits, noting that, between 1950 and 1960, urban renewal accounted for only approximately 1.3 percent of all construction activity in American cities.⁶⁹

Federal investment in urban renewal has also been shown to significantly spur private investment as well. The Urban Renewal Administration determined that such private investment was on the order of four times the amount of Federal spending.⁷⁰

Finally, beyond economics alone, the influx of more affluent residents to Southwest was also expected to enrich the city culturally and civically through their expanded involvement in the overall city.⁷¹

II. Redevelopment Policy, People, and Plans

Policies

Despite the fact that the idea of urban redevelopment had been in discussion for decades, if not centuries, it was not until the 1940s that the passage of several influential pieces of legislation would enable the public-private activity that would make large urban renewal projects possible.

D.C. Redevelopment Act of 1945

The first of these pieces of legislation was the District of Columbia Redevelopment Act of 1945. The 79th Congress passed this legislation as Public Law 592 on August 2, 1946.⁷² The purpose of the act was:

To provide for the replanning and rebuilding of slum, blighted, and other areas of the District of Columbia and the assembly, by purchase or condemnation, of real property in such areas and the sale or lease thereof for the redevelopment of such area in accordance with said plans; and to provide for the organization of, procedure for, and the financing of such planning, acquisition, and sale or lease; and for other purposes.⁷³

⁶⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 1, 14.

⁶⁹ Anderson, 10.

⁷⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 14.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁷² U.S. Congress, *District of Columbia Redevelopment Act*, 1945, 1; D.C. RLA, 'This is RLA' ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., [1975?]), 1.

⁷³ U.S. Congress, *District of Columbia Redevelopment Act*, 1945, 1.

The act further stipulated that, as regulatory processes had proven inadequate and private enterprise alone would not be able to remedy the situation, it was necessary for public participation in the planning and financing of a comprehensive redevelopment solution.⁷⁴

Through this act, Congress also established the Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA), the organization that would conduct these replanning and rebuilding activities, and it set aside a \$20 million trust to support the Agency's redevelopment activities. As for the Agency's activities – redevelopment – the act defined the process as:

Replanning, clearance, redesign, and rebuilding of project areas, including open-space types of uses, such as streets, recreation and other public grounds, and spaces around buildings, as well as buildings, structures, and improvements, but not excluding the continuance of some of the existing buildings or uses in a project area.⁷⁵

Housing Act of 1949

The Housing Act of 1949 was the second of the two major pieces of legislation that empowered the D.C. RLA in its mission to redevelop blighted areas in Washington, D.C. Passed as Public Law 171 on July 15, 1949, this national act led to an amendment to the D.C. Redevelopment Act of 1945 to allow the District to take advantage of the Title I program that the 1949 act enacted.

The act established a Federal program of loans and grant for Redevelopment. This created an additional funding source for the RLA to significantly supplement its initial trust fund from Congress.⁷⁶ These funds could be used:

for the planning and surveying of projects, temporary loans to finance land acquisition and other project activities, and Federal capital grants to meet 2/3 of the net cost of making land in redevelopment areas available for development at fair value for uses in accordance with the redevelopment plan.⁷⁷

Housing Act of 1954

The Housing Act of 1954, another national provision, contributed to further amendment of the D.C. Redevelopment Act of 1945. This act supplemented the existing Federal aid for clearance and redevelopment with additional support “for planning and carrying out rehabilitation of deteriorated structures and conservation of existing good neighborhoods.”⁷⁸ In this regard, the act was based largely on the Baltimore Plan of 1951-1953, which advised

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, v.

⁷⁷ Federal City Council, Washington, D.C. *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia: Report and Recommendations to the Committee on the District of Columbia of the House of Representatives* ([Washington, D.C.]: The Council, 1961), 25.

⁷⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1955, 6.

property owners on how to halt property deterioration.⁷⁹ Thanks to this Act, mass demolition was no longer the sole mechanism for Federally funded urban renewal; rather, selected rehabilitation would also be supported. By the time this legislation was passed, however, most of the plans for Southwest were well on their way, and the opportunity to pursue rehabilitation of the area was missed.

In order to receive Federal funds, the act required that communities develop a “workable program” for slum and blight eradication.⁸⁰ Such a program is basically a roadmap for redeveloping an area in a comprehensive and coordinate manner. Through the program, a community would survey its area’s problems, log what had already been done, determine what remained to be done, and prioritize when and how the necessary next steps would be taken. James Rouse’s and Nathaniel Keith’s *No Slums in Ten Years* established the framework for Washington D.C.’s “workable program,” which was approved in June 1955.⁸¹

Supreme Court Case: *Berman v. Parker*

During the same year as the passage of that latest Housing Act, a decision was also reached on a major legal matter standing in the way of the pursuit of Southwest’s urban renewal as planned. This legal decision would have monumental ramifications for redevelopment of the Southwest, as well as parcels of land around the country, continuing through the present day.

In December 1952, two owners of commercial property (a department store and a hardware store) in the 700 block of Fourth Street – part of the first Southwest redevelopment area, Project Area B – took the RLA to the District of Columbia Circuit Court to challenge the constitutionality of the Agency’s property acquisition practices. Their lawyers had three main arguments: (1) as the Redevelopment Act of 1945 had not defined the term “blight,” the RLA could not apply that ambiguous term to all of Project Area B, (2) the property being seized would go to private (i.e., developer) use, rather than “public use,” and (3) as the 1945 Act was primarily a housing law, it could not be applied to commercial property.⁸²

The case eventually reached the Supreme Court and, in December 1954, the court unanimously affirmed the Agency’s right to acquire property in a blighted area in order to comprehensively redevelop the area according to an urban renewal plan.⁸³ In his decision, Justice William O. Douglas wrote:

The concept of the public welfare is broad and inclusive ... the values it represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy,

⁷⁹ Elaine B. Todd, *Urban Renewal in the Nation’s Capital: A History of the Redevelopment Land Agency in Washington, D.C., 1946-1973*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Howard University, Washington, D.C., December 1986, 158-160.

⁸⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1955, 6.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² George Beveridge, “Southwest Court Fight – Complicated Issues in Redevelopment of Area B Await Decision of Special Three-Judge Bench,” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), September 1954.

⁸³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961. 4.

spacious as well as clean, well-balanced as well as carefully patrolled . . . If those who govern the D. of C. decide that the Nation's Capital should be beautiful as well as sanitary, there is nothing in the Fifth Amendment that stands in the way.⁸⁴

Organizations Involved

Numerous groups participated in Southwest's urban renewal, with the number of players exceeding otherwise typical levels given the unique situation of Washington's oversight by local as well as Federal leaders.

Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA)

The RLA was the public agency that was tasked by the D.C. Redevelopment Act of 1945 with carrying out urban renewal in Washington, D.C. In the words of the RLA itself, the Agency's purpose was "the ultimate end of urban decay through redevelopment and the prevention, reduction or elimination of the causes of urban blight." Its long-range goal, in the words of the Housing Act of 1949, is to see every District resident enjoy "a decent home and suitable environment."⁸⁵ The group was legally accountable to the U.S. Congress until July 1974, when it fell under the jurisdiction of the Mayor and City Council of the District of Columbia.⁸⁶ In 2001, it moved under the jurisdiction of the National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC) and was renamed the RLA Revitalization Corporation (RLARC).

The work of the RLA during Southwest's urban renewal consisted of 4 major steps: land acquisition, relocation of families and businesses, demolition and site preparation, and the sale, lease, or transfer of cleared land.⁸⁷

In the first step, land acquisition, the RLA bought land by either negotiation or eminent domain. Typical property acquisition costs in Southwest ranged between \$3,500 and \$9,000 per parcel.⁸⁸

In the second step, relocation, the RLA was responsible for finding decent, affordable replacement housing for all displaced families, with the aim of bettering their situation. In Southwest, no family was evicted during the process of relocation.⁸⁹ For businesses, the process was less rigid, and the RLA helped out as possible in identifying potential alternative sites for displaced businesses, although no replacement site was guaranteed. The relocation process will be discussed at greater length in a later section of this report.

⁸⁴ D.C. RLA, *This is RLA*, 4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 4; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961.

⁸⁸ Phil A. Doyle, "RLA Reports on: Rebirth of Southwest D.C.," *National Capital Area Realtor* 30:8 (August 1962): 6.

⁸⁹ Jim Banks, Group Interview by author, River Park, SW, Washington, D.C., June 24, 2004.

Step three, the process of demolition and site preparation, can also be thought of as two separate activities. First, as per the urban renewal plan, the RLA demolished the appropriate structures in order to clear the site for future development. In Southwest, demolition was vast, and most of the activity occurred between 1954 and 1958.⁹⁰ The second sub-step, the process of site preparation, was focused on numerous infrastructural activities. Streets were closed, opened, and paved, lots were resized, and systems of sewers, lighting, and sidewalks were put in place in advance of public or private rebuilding.⁹¹

Finally, in step four, the cleared and prepared land was sold or leased to a public or private developer.

Between the 1946 creation of the RLA and the Agency's commencement of operations in 1951 (and the even later pursuit of the first of the above activities, beginning in 1953), many intermediate events took place. In March 1947, the President of the United States appointed two members of the Board of Directors, and the D.C. Commissioners named the other three.⁹² In July of that year, Congress appropriated \$75,000 for development of a comprehensive plan for Washington, D.C., and a redevelopment plan for the proposed first redevelopment area, Marshall Heights, located in Southeast.⁹³ This was the first of two steps that needed to be taken before the RLA could commence redevelopment activities in an area. The second of these steps was the approval of redevelopment boundaries. The NCPPC would shortly take both of these steps (to be discussed later) in order to move urban renewal into the execution stage.

In February 1948, the RLA requested \$3.4 million of its \$20 million trust to support redevelopment plans for Marshall Heights. However, although the Marshall Heights plan was eventually approved, Congress later terminated the project.⁹⁴ Thus, no funds were received. In fact, the RLA did not receive its first funding until a June 1950 appropriation of \$8,000 for administrative expenses. During the period prior to this, the RLA had been operating out of office space donated by its first Board Chairman, Mark Lansburgh, at his family's Seventh Street, NW, department store.

In August 1950, the RLA requested approximately \$170,000 from Congress to fund advance redevelopment planning, the hiring of staff, and the opening of an office. The Agency received those funds in January 1951.⁹⁵ Also in that month, the Board of Directors appointed John R. Searles, Jr., as the RLA's first Executive Director.⁹⁶ The Federal City Council, a private organization representing downtown businesses, has termed this moment the "effective date for the commencement of urban redevelopment and renewal activities in the District of Columbia."⁹⁷

⁹⁰ Design Research, 21.

⁹¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 4.

⁹² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1951, 2.

⁹³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, v.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, v-vi.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, vi; D.C. RLA, *'This is RLA'*, 1.

⁹⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1951, 3.

⁹⁷ FCC, Washington, D.C., *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 26.

National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)

The National Capital Planning Commission is the planning organization for the metropolitan District of Columbia area, and it is responsible for developing and maintaining a master plan for the region. Before the RLA could take any action to acquire land for redevelopment, the NCPC first had to develop and approve a redevelopment plan. Further, when any changes were proposed to the plan, the NCPC had to amend the plan in order to ensure consistency with the planned redevelopment.

The history of the NCPC dates back to the parks movement. On June 6, 1924, an act of Congress created the National Capital Park Commission “to provide for the comprehensive systematic and continuous development of the park, parkway and playground system of the National Capital.”⁹⁸ On April 30, 1926, Congress abolished the Highway Commission and expanded the functional scope of the Park Commission (now renamed the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPPC)) to include comprehensive planning for transportation, parks, housing, community facilities, zoning, and the other elements of city and regional planning for the District of Columbia.⁹⁹ Finally, the passage of the National Capital Planning Act on July 19, 1952, renamed the Commission as the National Capital Planning Commission and expanded its geographic scope outside of the District to include the adjoining areas of Maryland and Virginia as well.¹⁰⁰

As shall be discussed in the later section on redevelopment plans, the NCPC, in its former incarnation as the NCPPC, developed the 1950 comprehensive plan for Washington, D.C., which highlighted Southwest as a blighted area in need of redevelopment. Later, the NCPC was also responsible for preparing and approving redevelopment plans for the overall area, as well as for its individual project areas.

Commissioners of the District of Columbia

The Commissioners of the District of Columbia, also known as the District Commissioners, or the D.C. Commissioners, was the one other body that stood in the way of the RLA’s execution of redevelopment. Following approval of a redevelopment plan by the NCPC, the District Commissioners held a public hearing on the plan in order to obtain public consensus on the proposed activities and acceptable answers to specific objections.¹⁰¹ As part of their review of the plan, the Commissioners were to ensure that adequate rehousing was being provided for displaced low-income families.¹⁰² Once this body approved the plan – within the 30-day review period – it was “certified to the Land Agency for execution.”¹⁰³

⁹⁸ [United States] National Capital Planning Commission and [United States] National Capital Regional Planning Council, *Information Bulletin on National Capital Planning*, [1960], Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, 4.

⁹⁹ U.S. NCPC and U.S. NCRP, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Melder, *City of Magnificent Intentions*, 517; U.S. NCPC and U.S. NCRP, 7.

¹⁰¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 4, 13.

¹⁰² U.S. NCPPC, *Redevelopment and Housing*, 31.

¹⁰³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 4, 13.

Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA)

The next major public organization involved in redevelopment was the HHFA. This group was a predecessor to the current Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and handled the Federal financing aspect of each urban renewal project.

The functions of the HHFA are best explained through description of its constituent organizations. The first of these groups, the Urban Renewal Administration (URA), administered the making of Federal loans and grants to the RLA for urban renewal activities, such as planning. The District had to match at least half of the Federal contribution. In the case of Southwest, this matching contribution came from infrastructural improvements to the renewal area, such as highways and schools.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the URA also provided technical assistance to ensure that local decisions were following the appropriate laws.¹⁰⁵ The second group, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), insured urban renewal-related mortgages in order to stimulate private investment.¹⁰⁶

National Capital Housing Authority

The National Capital Housing Authority (NCHA) developed and operated public housing. While no public housing was included in the Southwest Urban Renewal Area, adjacent and nearby public housing served as a relocation destination for many of the former residents of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the NCHA was an indispensable partner to the RLA in their work. Prior to 1943, the NCHA was known as the Alley Dwelling Authority.

Plans and Progress

While a case can be made that the history of Southwest's urban renewal dates back to the conditions that originated in its early days, this history takes as its starting point the Redevelopment Act of 1945, which first set the wheels of urban renewal into motion. The ramifications of that Act, as well as the early history of the Redevelopment Land Agency that it created, have already been discussed above. This section of the report will discuss the major plans that bridged urban renewal from the intentions of that early Act to the enactment of redevelopment "progress."

The specific plans that are discussed include the 1950 NCPPC Comprehensive Plan, various land use proposals for the entire urban renewal area, and the developer-sponsored redevelopment plans for the individual project areas.

¹⁰⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 4.

¹⁰⁵ U.S. URA and U.S. HHFA, 5.

¹⁰⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 4.

¹⁰⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 4.

1950 NCPPC Comprehensive Plan

In July 1947, Congress appropriated \$75,000 for the National Capital Park and Planning Commission to prepare a general plan for Washington, as well as project-specific redevelopment plans. By February 1948, the NCPPC had completed a general land use plan,¹⁰⁸ although it was not published in its five-monograph format until 1950. In an introductory letter in the first monograph, NCPPC chairman William W. Wurster outlined the intentions of the plan:

It is the Commission's hope that the comprehensive plan will be the guide not only for new growth throughout the National Capital metropolitan region, but also for the redevelopment of the blighted areas of the central city. Our democracy should not tolerate existing conditions.¹⁰⁹

In that same monograph, the NCPPC discussed redevelopment – a topic to which, along with housing, it would devote an entire monograph. It defined redevelopment in the following way:

Redevelopment is the new tool for obtaining a new land-use pattern. By this form of action, more than mere protection through zoning or guidance through subdivision control can be applied to achieve land use, circulation, and housing goals. Redevelopment areas are the places where the public, through government, must go into partnership with private enterprise, in order to make our Capital a city that meets the American standard of living.¹¹⁰

The NCPPC viewed redevelopment as more than a housing measure alone, but as a way to rebuild obsolete areas of the city, and as a means to achieve social and economic benefits, primarily through private enterprise.¹¹¹ It forecast that such a major undertaking for the whole of Washington, D.C., would take thirty years to complete.¹¹² Incidentally, a report published five years later by Rouse and Keith would trim that time period down to ten years. In reality, however, redevelopment will likely go on indefinitely.

Beyond definition alone, however, the Comprehensive Plan also made specific suggestions regarding how to proceed with this redevelopment process. For example, it recommended that the RLA be provided with the necessary funds to begin to take action. It also made general recommendations about particular redevelopment areas, highlighting three possibilities, and concluding, "It is likely that further studies will prove the Southwest as offering the most favorable possibilities for a pilot project."¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, v.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. NCPPC, *Washington Present and Future*, 0.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*; U.S. NCPPC, *Housing and Redevelopment*, 27.

¹¹² U.S. NCPPC, *Washington Present and Future*, 23.

¹¹³ U.S. NCPPC, *Housing and Redevelopment*, 33.

In identifying problem areas, the plan employed six criteria: overcrowding, lack of repairs, lack of sanitation, age of buildings, insufficient open space, low rents, and juvenile delinquency and disease. It reasoned, “When combinations of these factors reappear as high percentages of dwelling units within the same statistical areas, the Planning Commission can justify designation of squares so represented as being problem areas.”¹¹⁴

In addition to operating in areas that met these criteria, the plan also specified several other requirements of redevelopment. First, the plan specified that it must proceed on a neighborhood basis, rather than building by building (although the neighborhood plan can be broken up into specific project plans). Second, it held that the selected neighborhood had to be large enough to maintain itself. As a rule of thumb, it offered, “Ordinarily, this includes an area with a population tributary to an elementary school.” A final requirement specified by the plan was that the redevelopment area should have “definite and recognizable boundaries, such as major streets or other barriers.”¹¹⁵

Based upon all of these principles, the Plan identified Marshall Heights, Barry Farms, and the Southwest as potential redevelopment areas. The NCPPC also developed a project plan for Marshall Heights and, in accordance with the Commission’s recommendation of starting redevelopment with outside areas before moving on to the central slum areas, the RLA requested funds for both Marshall Heights and Barry Farms. (Public outcry would eventually terminate both projects before funding was ever even appropriated by Congress). In addition, the report also included an example of how the Southwest could be redeveloped.

This Southwest proposal, based on a January 1942 study of the area by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), looked at a 35-acre, 9-block area between Delaware Avenue and Eye, Fourth, and E streets. It suggested rehabilitating several structures, increasing open space, closing some blocks in order to create superblocks, and building new housing facing the open space.¹¹⁶

Selecting a Redevelopment Area

Even after the publication of the Comprehensive Plan, the selection of Washington D.C.’s first urban renewal area was still uncertain. Thus, in January 1951, the RLA contracted with the HHFA for advance planning of three areas: 600 acres in Northwest, 427 acres in Southwest, and 350 acres in Southeast. In March, the RLA provided funds to the Planning Commission for redevelopment planning in those three areas.¹¹⁷

Back in January, the Southwest redevelopment area was defined as the area “bounded by Virginia Ave on the north, Seventh St on the west, James Creek Parkway on the east, and P Street on the south.”¹¹⁸ By March, these boundaries were extended in order to incorporate

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 27-28.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 28.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 36.

¹¹⁷ U.S. NCP, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 1; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, 1.

¹¹⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1951, 5.

additional adjacent blighted areas, as well as to account for the planned location of the Southwest Expressway.¹¹⁹ Finally, in June, five tentative project areas in Southwest were identified and adopted by the Planning Commission and, in October, the RLA applied to the HHFA for funds to support final redevelopment planning for the first project area in Southwest.¹²⁰

Southwest Land Use Plans

Prior to the commencement of redevelopment activities in Southwest, a series of diverse land use proposals were considered as road maps for planning the new Southwest. The most radical of these were the conservative Peets Plan and the more radical Justement-Smith Plan. The plan that was eventually approved, following the development and consideration of a series of compromise plans, incorporated elements of each of those two extreme plans – although the Justement-Smith Plan ultimately proved more influential in shaping the character of the redeveloped neighborhood.

Peets Plan

In 1951, the NCPPC commissioned Elbert Peets, a Planning Commission staff member and eminent historian of the L'Enfant Plan, to develop an urban renewal plan for Southwest. Generally speaking, his completed plan advocated upgrading the current Southwest by gradually rehabilitating its buildings while maintaining its street grid and socioeconomic character. Peets recognized the historic character of the area's buildings and trees and proposed that these, along with the L'Enfant Plan, should be changed as little as possible, while simultaneously improving conditions for its residents.¹²¹ In the words of John R. Searles, Jr., the RLA's first executive director, "[Peets] believed that the basic dark red brick texture of the area was priceless and could never be reproduced."¹²² Geographically speaking, the plan sought to redevelop 178 acres of Southwest, while leaving untouched the land west of Tenth Street, the Maine Avenue frontage north of N Street, the commercial frontage on Fourth and Seventh streets, and housing in the southeast.¹²³

Peets' rehabilitation-oriented approach was supported by previous conclusions reached in Arthur Goodwillie's assessment of the area as a potential site for war housing. In his earlier plan, after noting the many poor conditions of an 85-square portion of Southwest, Goodwillie then proceeded to point out its numerous assets, which could serve as a useful base for rehabilitation:

The streets are wide and well shaded. Water, light and sewer mains, sidewalks and pavements are in place, paid for and well maintained. Side by side with decrepit frame

¹¹⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, 1-2.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, vi.

¹²¹ U.S. NCPC and Frederick Gutheim, *Worthy of the Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 314.

¹²² Quoted in Goode, 407.

¹²³ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 21.

structures are some 2900 substandard but basically sound brick buildings, usually in rows, virtually all of which can be saved and are well worth saving.¹²⁴

This same philosophy permeated the Peets Plan as well.

Residentially, Peets argued that the location and character of the Southwest was well suited for low-income residents, and so most of the current residences should remain.¹²⁵ Of these, 400 living units would be rehabilitated, while 300 would remain as they were. In terms of new housing, Peets proposed the construction of elevator apartments in the southeast corner of the area, near Fort McNair and the waterfront, as well as low-rent housing in the northeast corner.¹²⁶ Where new row houses and small apartment buildings were also deemed necessary, they would be woven into the existing fabric and oriented towards gardens that were to be created by closing some minor streets.¹²⁷ Also notable was Peets' introduction of housing to the area north of the proposed expressway.¹²⁸

In the Peets plan, most community facilities would be retained, but expanded. Thus, playground areas would be increased at existing schools, and two new schools would be added. Churches and other facilities would remain as well.¹²⁹

Peets did not propose many changes to the existing first commercial facilities in Southwest, including the areas along Fourth and Seventh streets and Maine Avenue. In terms of second commercial, however, he suggested a significant increase in land area, particularly in the northern portion of the neighborhood, as well as along the waterfront.¹³⁰

Harland Bartholomew, an esteemed St. Louis planner, was hired by the NCPC to conduct a thorough review of the Peets Plan, which he ultimately described as "basically conservative, proposing maximum retention of existing buildings and facilities of a good or satisfactory character."¹³¹ In his review, he identified six major advantages and six major disadvantages of the plan. The advantages included: its provision of low-rent housing for the area's current low-income families, with a minimum of relocation; its explicitness; its retention of sound existing structures; the practicality of its housing proposals from a real estate perspective; the gradual and organic nature of the redevelopment proposed, allowing for stops, starts, and changes mid-process; and the emphasis on the development of citywide commercial areas in Southwest.¹³² The disadvantages he cited included: the disconnect between land use allocations in the Peets Plan versus those in the Comprehensive Plan, particularly concerning the large amount of

¹²⁴ Goodwillie, 17.

¹²⁵ Robert Wrigley Jr., "Development Plans for the Southwest survey Area of Washington, D.C.," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* XVIII-XIX (1952-1953): 194.

¹²⁶ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 23-24.

¹²⁷ U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 314.

¹²⁸ Wrigley, 194.

¹²⁹ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 23-24.

¹³⁰ Wrigley, 194.

¹³¹ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 21.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 24.

commercial space; its advocacy of several questionable land use locations, including proposals to develop housing north of the Expressway, to place so much second commercial on the waterfront, and to locate low-income housing in the northwest; the inadequate school plan; an over-emphasis on high-rise apartment buildings; legal issues surrounding the conversion of streets to park space; and the minimal amount of transformation it would actually provide.¹³³

In the end, the Peets Plan was rejected, largely due to this last disadvantage. The HHFA and others did not think that its proposed changes to the area were radical enough to justify the public expense. Thus, it was deemed economically infeasible.¹³⁴

Justement-Smith Plan

In response to the perceived inadequacy of the Peets Plan, in 1952 the RLA commissioned planner Louis Justement, of Justement, Elam, and Darley, and architect-planner Chloethiel Woodard Smith, of Keyes, Smith, Satterlee, and Lethbridge, to develop a more radical alternative plan for Southwest redevelopment.¹³⁵ In his 1946 book *New Cities for Old*, Justement had written, “Let us not be afraid to plan the city.” He further elaborated, “The city is a living, growing organism and the buildings that compose it must be constantly renewed in order to preserve the entire organism.”¹³⁶ These principles, as well as similar sentiments expressed in the writings of Smith, would influence the pair’s less tentative proposal.

When the RLA commissioned Justement and Smith, it did not require them to consider the rehabilitation of existing structures, but proposed a less restrictive mindset that would “release and stimulate progress” outside of Southwest as well.¹³⁷ Where the Peets Plan represented the most conservative end of the spectrum, the Justement-Smith Plan detailed the most substantial amount of change to the area that could produce desirable results.¹³⁸ Moreover, where Peets was concerned with minimizing inconvenience and relocation for the existing residents, Justement and Smith were focused on maximizing the business and economic benefits of redevelopment. As Justement had also written in *New Cities for Old*, “Our cities were built for the sake of making money. If we wish to rebuild them with the same energy we displayed in the first instance, we should make it profitable for the entrepreneur to undertake the task, unless we are prepared to make profound changes in the profit system.”¹³⁹

There were several key aspects of the Justement-Smith Plan. First, the plan was geared towards a mixed-income residential community, with a much greater emphasis on upper income groups than the Peets Plan. Second, it recognized the importance of reconnecting the Southwest with the rest of Washington, D.C. – a situation that it primarily sought to address through the construction of a Tenth Street promenade, overpassing the railroad tracks. Third, it aimed to

¹³³ Ibid., 25.

¹³⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, 2.

¹³⁵ Goode, 408.

¹³⁶ Justement, 6.

¹³⁷ U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 315.

¹³⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, 3.

¹³⁹ Justement, 6.

completely reorganize first commercial activities through the construction of a series of major shopping centers. Finally, it exploited the natural advantage of the waterfront as a location for high-end housing, commercial facilities, and recreational areas.¹⁴⁰ It should also be noted that this proposal was fundamentally a concept plan, leaving much room for detailed interpretation, and even going so far as to encourage the variety and texture that multiple architects and planners would infuse with their individual contributions to its enactment.¹⁴¹ In its extremism, the plan also functioned as a useful tool for attracting developers who would be drawn by the economic potential of a project located on the site of a former slum.¹⁴²

Residentially, the plan recommended the inclusion of as much high-income development as possible, although it argued that the plan could be adapted for low-income development if desired.¹⁴³ The high-income residential areas would be particularly concentrated in the northwest corner of the urban renewal area, near the proposed cultural center and central business district, as well as adjacent to the waterfront. Low-income housing would be concentrated near current public housing in the southeast.¹⁴⁴

As with the Peets Plan, the Justement-Smith Plan would retain viable community facilities. In addition, once second commercial uses were removed from the waterfront, the area would be turned into “an inviting park strip with walks, a bicycle path, small refreshment stands and a spacious waterfront café.”¹⁴⁵

According to the plan, first commercial uses would be largely reorganized into major shopping centers, although some “corner grocery” facilities would also remain in residential areas. The major commercial centers would be located north of the expressway, between Ninth and Seventh streets, and south of Eye Street, between Delaware Avenue and South Capitol Street. Second commercial was recommended for the areas near the expressway and west of South Capitol Street.¹⁴⁶

As already mentioned, boundaries and entryways were important aspects of the Justement-Smith Plan. A widened and landscaped Tenth Street promenade would serve as the primary entryway. It was intended to connect directly to Maine Avenue along the waterfront, although topographic conditions led to the insurmountable engineering difficulties that prevented that realization.¹⁴⁷ In addition to Tenth Street, the plan also proposed a secondary landscaped

¹⁴⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, 3.

¹⁴¹ U.S. NCPCP and Gutheim, 316; Mary Mix Foley, “What is Urban Redevelopment?” *Architectural Forum* 97 (August 1952), 128.

¹⁴² U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 317.

¹⁴³ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 26-27.

¹⁴⁴ Wrigley, 196.

¹⁴⁵ Foley, 128.

¹⁴⁶ Wrigley, 196.

¹⁴⁷ U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 315.

entryway at Fourth Street, terminating at a plaza next to Fort McNair.¹⁴⁸ In practice, however, Fourth Street was actually de-emphasized as a throughway in the later redevelopment plans.

Consistent with the Justement-Smith Plan's engagement of the expressway in developing an entryway, the plan also included a point of view regarding the expressway's location. Instead of having the roadway provide yet another divider in the Southwest by running through its area, the plan suggested that the expressway be placed adjacent to the railroad tracks, thereby defining the residential area and avoiding adding another intermittent boundary. Justement and Smith were unsuccessful in this proposal, however, in part because of desires to save a refrigeration plant (now the Washington Design Center) that would have had to be destroyed in the event of expressway rerouting.¹⁴⁹

As with the Peets' Plan, the NCPC also asked Harland Bartholomew to analyze the Justement-Smith proposal. Versus the balanced six advantages and six disadvantages identified in the Peets Plan, Bartholomew identified only five advantages and as many as eight disadvantages in the later plan.

The advantages included the following: its "imaginative," "forward looking," and "almost idealistic" character; its compliance with the Comprehensive Plan in terms of land use; its favorable arrangement of schools and public uses; its desirable reduction of street area through street closings; and, its relatively open nature, designating large amounts of open space. The counteracting eight disadvantages were the following: its substantial level of proposed transformation, which Bartholomew perceived as only questionably achievable; several potentially impractical and unsubstantiated real estate features, including too high a proportion of high-rise units, an office building west of Tenth Street, a shopping center north of the freeway, and construction of luxury apartment buildings facing the produce center; its lack of provision for rehousing, including low income housing (note: this was outside their remit); its minimization of Maine Avenue's commercial use; the dissonance of its high-rise proposals with current zoning; its costly rearrangement of first commercial uses; the difficulty of measuring its economic impacts, given its unspecificity; and, its risky proposal to begin construction with the luxury northwest high-rises, in the hope that the other areas would develop in accordance.¹⁵⁰

In the end, like the Peets Plan, the Justement-Smith Plan was not adopted as the overall plan for the Southwest. However, unlike the Peets Plan, it undeniably served as a guide and inspiration for future plans for the area,¹⁵¹ including both the Zeckendorf Plan for Project Area C, and the development by one of its co-authors, Chloethiel Woodard Smith, in Project Area B.

Harland Bartholomew's Compromise Plan

As has already been discussed, the planner Harland Bartholomew played a key role in mediating and advising upon Southwest's redevelopment. Bartholomew is often credited with

¹⁴⁸ Wrigley, 196.

¹⁴⁹ U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 316; SCC and SWNA, 9.

¹⁵⁰ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 27-29.

¹⁵¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 4.

having turned planning into a profession, as he was the first full-time planner employed by an American city – St. Louis. In addition, he is remembered for demonstrating that planning is government’s responsibility, and for rationalizing and systemizing planning into a discipline that can be taught.¹⁵² In addition to heading his own planning firm, Bartholomew also served as Chairman of the NCPC between 1953 and 1960. Prior to that time, or between 1922 and 1952, he served as a consultant to the Planning Commission.¹⁵³ It was at the end of that period that he was called upon to offer advice on the planning process for Southwest.

In May 1952, Harland Bartholomew & Associates completed its own Southwest redevelopment report. Since neither the Peets Plan nor the Justement-Smith Plan had met the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan, the NCPC requested that Bartholomew and his firm review and interpret the *Comprehensive Plan for Washington* relative to Southwest and develop a third plan combining elements of both of the two existing plans.¹⁵⁴ The report’s recommendations served as a basis and set of guiding principles for the NCPC’s Land Use Plan for the Southwest Survey Area.¹⁵⁵

Generally speaking, the Bartholomew report recommended a plan between the Peets and Justement-Smith extremes.¹⁵⁶ This report has already alluded to the essence of those recommendations through a description of the analysis his report offered on the two existing plans. However, some of the specific details are discussed below.

As suggested by Bartholomew’s criticism of the Justement-Smith Plan’s emphasis on high-income residents and residences, the report advocates a low-income residential emphasis in the new Southwest. Citing lower income groups’ greater need to live close to their employment, the great difficulty of so significantly upgrading an area’s socioeconomic character, and the associated relocation issues involved in replacing lower income with upper income residents, Bartholomew write, “The Survey Area should be redeveloped predominantly as a moderate to lower-income residence area, this being in accordance with the basic needs and requirements of the population from a district-wide point of view.”¹⁵⁷ This did not mean that the area would be exclusively lower income, however, as the report also advocated the inclusion of housing for all income groups, suggesting that upper income housing be introduced as late in the process as possible.¹⁵⁸ As a result, the report concluded that only half of the existing population would need to be relocated.¹⁵⁹

In terms of the actual residences, Bartholomew recommends rehabilitation “only where a building is in very good condition and so located that it does not interfere with the project

¹⁵² Eldridge Lovelace, *Harland Bartholomew: His Contributions to American Urban Planning* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Printing Office, 1993), <http://stlouis.missouri.org/heritage/bartholomew/>, 1-2.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁵⁴ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 1; D.C. RLA, ‘*This is RLA*’, 4.

¹⁵⁵ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 11.

¹⁵⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, 3.

¹⁵⁷ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 14.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

plan.”¹⁶⁰ Regarding the total number of dwelling units to occupy the redeveloped area, Bartholomew recommended a figure virtually halfway between that of the Peets and Justement-Smith Plans.

The report suggested imprecise dwelling unit estimates to be used as a guideline. The advised number of high-rise apartment building units – “no more than 1/5” – was relatively low given significant recent construction of housing of this sort in other parts of the city. The row houses were set at a figure of “at least 30 percent” given the strong demand and good financing available, as well as the better caliber of tenant that they attract. Two-story flats were described as “relatively economical to construct” and as offering individuals the opportunity to buy a block while occupying one unit and renting others at a low rent rate. Finally, the two-to-three story flats recommended would offer relatively high density and low-priced rental units close to the center of the city.¹⁶¹

All of the Southwest land use plans advocated increasing the land allocated to community uses from approximately 9 percent to 15 percent of the land area. Schools and recreational space comprised the greatest portion of these community facilities, or 56 of 63 acres in the Bartholomew plan. Bartholomew suggests the construction of two new schools, and the retention of the public library (then housed in a wing of Jefferson Junior High School). Other services, but not structures, that the report advocated retaining include the police and fire stations, churches, and community houses.¹⁶²

Commercially, the Bartholomew report endorsed the continuation of existing first commercial usage on Seventh Street, Maine Avenue, and Fourth Street, between F and L streets.¹⁶³ It stated: “The practical solution to the location of the business property would certainly appear to be to improve the character of the present uses but to keep them in the same general area.”¹⁶⁴ It also argued for the continuation of selected second commercial uses, including those in the areas between the proposed expressway and the railroad tracks, west of Tenth Street, and near South Capitol Street. The types of industry it regarded as appropriate for Southwest included bottling plants, laundries, creameries, warehouses, and research laboratories.¹⁶⁵

Finally, beyond specific land use recommendations, the Bartholomew report also suggested five general criteria that any redevelopment plan for the Southwest should satisfy. These included recommendations that the plan: be sufficiently complete and definite so as to enable analysis and individual project plan development, propose marketable property uses,

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶² Ibid., 12.

¹⁶³ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 18.

¹⁶⁴ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 30.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 19.

deliver maximum benefits at minimal capital costs, be executable in stages, and minimize relocation problems.¹⁶⁶

NCPC Land Use Plan

With the written assistance of Elbert Peets, as well as the input of the Bartholomew report, which incorporated both of the two earlier reports, the NCPC issued its own compromise land use plan in late 1952.¹⁶⁷ It was adopted by the NCPC on October 24, 1952,¹⁶⁸ although numerous revisions and project-level adjustments would be made for years after that. The hallmark of the plan was that it avoided the “extremes of idealism . . . and the extreme of expediency”¹⁶⁹ that had characterized several previous plan proposals.

There were seven principal proposals of the plan:

- (1) That the area continue to house about the same number of families
- (2) That the plan induce balanced and protected residential neighborhoods for all income groups, with approximately one quarter of the housing designated for low-income families
- (3) That the Southwest expressway, and other thoroughfare proposals, be approved by the Commissioners so that heavy through traffic may be kept off residential streets so far as possible
- (4) That land for city-wide commercial needs be provided to the maximum extent consistent with the housing of the same size population
- (5) That, in general, the established local commercial centers be continued
- (6) That residential redevelopment be governed by adequate density standards to prevent over-crowding of land
- (7) That most of the low-rent housing, whether public or private, be located east of Fourth Street, although not exclusively so.¹⁷⁰

As a high-level summary of some of the land use debates that took place between the many plans, the following table compares several proposed land use allocations for the 427-acre Southwest Survey Area:¹⁷¹

	<u>Old SW</u>	<u>Peets</u>	<u>Just.-Smith</u>	<u>Bartholomew</u>	<u>NCPC Adopted</u>
Vacant	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Residential	31%	29%	32%	32%	29%
Public and Semi-Public	9%	15%	15%	15%	15%

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁶⁷ U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 317.

¹⁶⁸ US NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*.

¹⁶⁹ Quoted in U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 317.

¹⁷⁰ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, ii.

¹⁷¹ “Old SW” and “Peets” from Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 22; “Justement-Smith” from Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 26; “Bartholomew” from Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 8-9; “NCPC Adopted” from U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 24.

First Commercial	5%	4%	6%	6%	5%
Industrial	9%	12%	9%	8%	12%
Streets and Alleys	44%	40%	40%	39%	40%

Regarding the income group of the future residents, the NCPC was not willing to completely turn the area over to high-income residents. It also estimated that half of the old Southwest residents would be able to afford the new construction. Finally, for those who were displaced, adequate compensation would have to be made. In the redevelopment plan for Project Area B, the NCPC noted, “A plan based on the use of public money to accomplish a public purpose cannot ignore social values of such importance or contemplate sweeping measures of family displacement without a reasonable and specific plan for replacement.”¹⁷²

The housing units would comprise “a dramatic arrangement of apartment buildings overlooking parks bordering the waterfront,”¹⁷³ and neighborhood unity would be encouraged by the consolidation of existing lots. The expressway would serve as the northern boundary for residential structures, and the communities south of that boundary would fall into four clusters: (1) the area bounded by Maine Avenue, Fourth Street, the expressway, and M Street; (2) the area bounded by Maine Avenue, Delaware Avenue, M Street, and P Street; (3) the area bounded by Delaware Avenue, South Capitol Street, M Street, and P Street; and (4) the area bounded by Fourth Street, South Capitol Street, the expressway, and M Street.¹⁷⁴ The following table summarizes various plans’ recommended distribution of housing units, showing both the absolute number of dwelling units of each type, as well as the percentage that those represented of the total dwelling units:¹⁷⁵

	Peets		Just.-Smith		Bartholomew		NCPC Adopted	
High-Rise Apts.	1,700	30%	2,681	44%	1,076	19%	1,827	33%
Row Houses	1,350	24%	832	14%	1,614	28%	1325	24%
2-Story Flats	400	7%	1,062	18%	538	9%	440	8%
2-3 Story Apts.	990	18%	1,468	24%	2,152	37%	1,610	29%
Low-Rent	770	14%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Subtotal	5,210	93%	6,043	100%	5,380	93%	5,202	94%
Above Commercial	390	7%	0	0%	420	7%	360	7%
Total Units	5,600	100%	6,043	100%	5,800	100%	5,562	100%

In terms of community facilities, the plan stipulated that all structurally sound churches and other semi-public facilities would be retained, and that public facilities would be supplemented with one new school and additional recreational space.

¹⁷² U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 20.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁷⁵ “Peets” from Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 23; “Justement-Smith” from Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 26; “Bartholomew” from Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 17; “NCPC Adopted” from U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 24.

Commercially, waterfront-related commercial activities would be expanded at that location, and the Fourth Street first commercial facilities would be reorganized into a more focal shopping center. Among second commercial uses, a contested produce market in the northwest corner of the quadrant would remain, and other industrial facilities would congregate in the area between the expressway and the railroad tracks.¹⁷⁶

The NCPC's plan also endorsed Justement and Smith's Tenth Street promenade proposal, although it recognized that the specific details, including the proposed junction with Maine Avenue, still needed to be determined.¹⁷⁷

Individual Redevelopment Projects

At the same time that alternative plans were being prepared for the overall Southwest Survey Area, work was also proceeding on development of a plan for the first redevelopment area. In May 1952, the NCPC rescinded the boundaries of the five tentative Southwest project areas and replaced them with the boundaries of two definitive project areas – A and B. Project Area A, intended as the site of future office and commercial facilities,¹⁷⁸ generally included the area bounded by D Street on the north, Seventh Street on the east, Maine Avenue on the south, and Eleventh Street on the west. Project Area B consisted of 76 acres generally bounded by E Street and the railroad tracks on the north, South Capitol Street on the east, Eye Street on the south, and Fourth Street on the west.¹⁷⁹ As seemingly insurmountable planning problems existed in Project Area A, Project Area B became the site of the first redevelopment project.¹⁸⁰ Project Area A would later be incorporated into Project Area C.

Project Area B

EARLY PROGRESS

As already discussed, in May 1952, at the same time that the Justement-Smith Plan was completed, boundaries were also set for Project Area B – the first redevelopment project in Washington, D.C.

Project Area B was a symbolically appropriate starting point for urban renewal for many of the same reasons that the Southwest had been chosen – it encompassed some of the worst slum conditions in one of the most slum-ridden corners of the Capital. 1,006 structures, containing 1,345 dwelling units, occupied this 76.6-acre area of the old Southwest. The following table characterizes some of the dwelling unit conditions in Project Area B relative to those of the overall Southwest Survey Area:¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 21-23.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁷⁸ Goode, 408.

¹⁷⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, 1.

¹⁸⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1954, 19.

¹⁸¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, 13.

	SW Survey Area	Project Area B	Delta
No inside toilet	43.2%	57.8%	14.6%
No inside running water	27.2%	31.3%	4.1%
No installed bath	44.3%	60.3%	16.0%
No wash basin or installed laundry tub	68.0%	82.2%	14.2%
No electricity installed	21.3%	29.3%	8.0%
No central heating installed	70.2%	83.8%	13.6%

Project Area B's population was also almost entirely black. The race of 97.5 percent of the project area's population was black, versus that of only 78.6 percent of the population of the overall Survey Area. In total, 5,012 people, or 1,345 families occupied the area.¹⁸²

In June 1952, funds were approved for development of the plan for that area,¹⁸³ and that plan was approved by the NCPC on October 24.¹⁸⁴ On November 12, the RLA placed an advertisement in four Washington papers, requesting proposals from parties interested in purchasing or leasing Project Area B's land. These advertisements stated that proposals would be judged based upon the following factors:

- (1) The purchase-price or lease-rent to be paid for the land
- (2) The degree to which the proposal met the specifications and broad objectives of the Redevelopment Plan
- (3) The rents or sales prices on the dwelling accommodations to be constructed by the redeveloper
- (4) The degree to which one-third of the dwelling units proposed met the low-rent requirement of the Redevelopment Plan; namely, rentals of \$17 per room per month or less
- (5) The experience, qualifications, ability, and interest of the principal participants involved in any proposal.¹⁸⁵

On December 31, following a successful public hearing held by the District Commissioners, the plan for Project Area B was fully approved.¹⁸⁶

PLAN DETAILS

The Redevelopment Plan for Area B was an attempt to apply the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan to a very local area of the city. As such, in its introductory pages, it lists the following nine local objectives of the Comprehensive Plan that it meets:

¹⁸² U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 3.

¹⁸³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1952, vi.

¹⁸⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1953, 1.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸⁶ FCC, Washington, D.C., *Urban Renewal Plan in the District of Columbia*, 26.

- (1) To continue the area as a residential location for low-income persons, many of whom are employed within walking distance in the Southwest Survey Area, the central business district and nearby government offices and establishments
- (2) To utilize in the most direct manner available school and recreation facilities which are most needed by the large families prevalent in low-income groups
- (3) To provide, both as to location and general environment, a cross-section of housing types shown by the Survey Area analysis to be needed and marketable, with a substantial proportion of these types designated as low-rent under the District of Columbia Redevelopment Act of 1945
- (4) To allocate land in the project area for the Southwest expressway
- (5) To provide new second commercial areas to help meet the city-wide deficit for land in this use category
- (6) To rehabilitate Fourth Street through the stimulus provided by partial redevelopment within the project area
- (7) To rearrange the recreation facilities of Randall Junior High School in anticipation of the construction of a swimming pool which would disrupt the present layout
- (8) To create a well-planned, cohesive neighborhood unit which will eliminate slum and alley dwellings and which can be maintained against blight and deterioration for the duration of the Project
- (9) To provide maximum opportunity for large-scale development by private enterprise.¹⁸⁷

Also notable were the plan's provisions for potential future low-income and/or minority ethnicity residents. Specifically, it required that "one-third of the housing be designated for low-income families with rents not exceeding \$17 per room per month, excluding utilities"¹⁸⁸ and that "there be appropriate covenants running with the land with respect to the prohibition of restrictions upon the sale, lease, or occupancy of any land or real property in the Project Area on the basis of race, color, or creed."¹⁸⁹ Unless amended, these provisions, along with all others in the plan, would remain in effect for forty years from its date of adoption in 1952.¹⁹⁰

While the provision for a race-neutral housing policy proved trend setting for the city, the low rent requirement was eventually deemed feasibly impractical. Thus, the NCPC approved its elimination in June 1959,¹⁹¹ with the D.C. Commissioners later confirming that decision. The revocation was based on several considerations, including cost increases that made the \$17 limit unrealistic, the construction of public housing elsewhere in Southwest, and the absence of Federal housing legislation that would make the construction of housing for lower-middle-

¹⁸⁷ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, Appendix E 4-5.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, ii.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Appendix E 15.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Appendix E 16.

¹⁹¹ Robert E. McLaughlin, "Opening Statement," in Government of the District of Columbia, "Public Hearing: Revision of Redevelopment Plan for Southwest Project Area 'B,'" 17 July 1959, 2, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers.

income families economical.¹⁹² While the Washington Housing Association endorsed the amendment, with the proviso that development contain middle-income housing,¹⁹³ groups like the Southwest Citizens Association opposed the change on the grounds that it would constitute a breach of faith with displaced former occupants of Southwest, as well as that it would set a dangerous precedent for urban renewal projects elsewhere in the country.¹⁹⁴ Despite planners' original intentions, then, the Southwest would be developed beyond the means of lower and lower-middle income residents until the late 1960s.

Generally speaking, the Redevelopment Plan for Project Area B specified residential and second commercial usage for the area. More specifically, it included specifications for 750 to 900 dwelling units¹⁹⁵ – a number later updated to 1500¹⁹⁶ – consisting of row houses, 2-story flats, and apartment houses; community facilities like an enlarged Randall Recreation Center; first commercial usage along Fourth Street, along with incremental second-floor housing where appropriate;¹⁹⁷ and second commercial development – including the Southwest Market Center, Inc. – between the expressway and E Street. The following table summarizes the former and proposed land use acreage in Project Area B:¹⁹⁸

	Old Southwest		NCPC Plan	
Residential	26.8	35.0%	24.2	31.6%
Community Facilities	11.4	14.9%	11.7	11.7%
First Commercial	1.8	2.3%	3.9	5.1%
Second Commercial	2.7	3.5%	5.1	6.7%
Streets and Alleys	33.9	44.3%	17.5	22.8%
Expressway			14.2	18.5%
Total acres	76.6	100%	76.6	100%

In tandem with the specifications for new development, certain sites were excluded from the project area boundaries and, thus, redevelopment. These included the parcels of land occupied by the D.C. Health Center, the Randall Junior High School, part of the Randall Recreation Center, and a South Capitol Street dog pound.¹⁹⁹ In addition, the pastor of the Friendship Baptist Church was later successful in removing his church's property from the redevelopment boundaries as well.

¹⁹² Charles A. Horsky, "Statement of Charles A. Horsky, President Washington Housing Association on Proposed Changes in the Redevelopment Plan for Southwest Redevelopment Project Area B," 17 July 1959, 4, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers.

¹⁹³ Horsky, 6.

¹⁹⁴ Albert J. Headley, Jr., "Statement of Albert J. Headley, Jr. Before the District Commissioners on July 17, 1959 as a Representative of the Southwest Citizens Association," 17 July 1959, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers.

¹⁹⁵ U.S. NCPC, "Appendix E," *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 8.

¹⁹⁶ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Plan in the District of Columbia*, 29.

¹⁹⁷ U.S. NCPC, "Appendix E," *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 11; Wrigley, 200

¹⁹⁸ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 4; U.S. NCPC, "Appendix E," 7.

¹⁹⁹ U.S. NCPC, "Appendix E," *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 13-15.

PROJECT EXECUTION

Following plan approval by the NCPC and D.C. Commissioners, progress proceeded toward plan execution. By the end of March 1953, the RLA had received ten proposals to redevelop Project Area B. After meeting individually with the various parties, by the end of April they selected the Bush Construction Company, of Norfolk, VA, to be the primary redeveloper, in coordination with five old Southwest businesses who wanted to rebuild there: Safeway Stores, Inc., Martin Wiegand, Inc., Eagle Transfer Co., Max Greenwald, and Rudderforth Bros.²⁰⁰ Also in that month, the RLA received its first funding from the HHFA for Project Area B. This funding included a loan of \$8,838,391 and a capital grant of \$6,385,186.²⁰¹ In May, the RLA engaged appraisers in preparation for land acquisition, and in June they formally opened a relocation field office at 617 Fourth St.²⁰² In July, they relocated the first family.

One obstacle that somewhat slowed progress in Project Area B was the December 1952 law suit that two commercial property owners filed against the RLA's practice of eminent domain. In November 1953, a circuit court ruled in the RLA's favor.²⁰³ One year later, in November 1954, the case, *Berman v. Parker*, eventually reached the Supreme Court and was settled once and for all in the RLA's favor.²⁰⁴

Despite these legal difficulties, the RLA acquired its first parcel of land in Project Area B on December 8, 1953. The two-story brick row house and 810 square feet of land located at 825 Third St. were purchased from owner William J. Emmett, of 2223 Nichols Ave., SE.²⁰⁵ A more symbolic step was taken when Dixon's Court, Washington, D.C.'s largest and most ill-reputed alley dwelling community, was demolished on April 26, 1954. The Federal Housing Administrator, Albert Cole, presided at the event, which was the first demolition of a slum dwelling in the Washington, D.C., urban renewal process.²⁰⁶ The demolition of this large area lasted through the end of May.²⁰⁷

Another significant hiccup in Project Area B's progress occurred when the Bush Construction Company became ineligible for FHA-insured mortgage financing – a near-necessity for its participation in Southwest's urban renewal. The FHA notified the RLA of this ineligibility in April 1955, citing as their rationale the company's previous participation in the FHA Section 608 program, which was at that time under Congressional and administrative investigation. Although the FHA later reinstated the company's eligibility, the Bush Company

²⁰⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1953, 2; Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Plan in the District of Columbia*, 27.

²⁰¹ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Plan in the District of Columbia*, 26.

²⁰² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1953, 2.

²⁰³ D.C. RLA, 'This is RLA', 4.

²⁰⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1955, 2.

²⁰⁵ Richard L. Lyons, "Land Agency Buys 1st Area B Property," *Washington Post*, 9 December 1953.

²⁰⁶ George Beveridge, "Cole Launches Demolition of Area B Units," *Evening Star* [Washington, D.C.], 26 April 1954.

²⁰⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1954, 5.

had already withdrawn as redeveloper in May, having been unable to obtain alternative mortgage financing.²⁰⁸

The RLA responded to this significant loss with a hasty search for a new residential developer for Project Area B. After reviewing the three proposals submitted, on October 21, 1955, the Agency selected the joint proposal by Roger L. Stevens and James H. Scheuer, both of New York, NY.²⁰⁹ On July 2, 1956, the developers, now operating as the First National Capitol Redevelopment Corporation, signed a lease agreement for Project Area B.²¹⁰ The redevelopment plans drawn up by their architects, Satterlee and Smith, built upon ideas contained in the plans drawn up by architect Milton J. Prassas for previous developer Ralph Bush.²¹¹

Also during this time period, on January 31, 1956, the NCPC modified the redevelopment plan for Project Area B to replace the proposed retail construction with high-density apartments. The Commission made this change in response to requests by Project Area C's developer, Webb & Knapp, to focus all first commercial development in its own portion of the quadrant.²¹²

Although relocation of the population and land acquisition had been substantially finished by late 1955, these activities were not completed until 1957.²¹³ Shortly after, on April 9, 1958, ground was broken for the first private construction in a Washington, D.C., redevelopment area.²¹⁴ This construction project was for Capitol Park Apartments, the first high rise in architect Chloethiel Woodard Smith's Capitol Park residential complex. (See the Residential Buildings section for additional information.) As this project went on to become the first Title I project to win an award for design, architect I.M. Pei held up Project B as "proof that the redevelopment process could produce a result beyond slum clearance alone."²¹⁵

In fiscal 1959,²¹⁶ the RLA completed the relocation of the last of the twenty-one businesses relocated from Project Area B. By this point, the Agency had also already relocated 1,041 families from the area. The last building was also demolished during that period.²¹⁷ Project Area B was completed in approximately August 1963,²¹⁸ almost twelve years after the October 1951 project start, which was marked by the initial determination of Project Area B's boundaries. After an analysis of the overall Project B redevelopment process, the Federal City Council concluded that the experiences of the developers and agencies, including the numerous

²⁰⁸ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 27; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 4.

²⁰⁹ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 27.

²¹⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1956, 2.

²¹¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1954, 10, referenced in Design Research, 19; Design Research, 19.

²¹² Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 28.

²¹³ D.C. Board of Commissioners, *State of the Nation's Capital: A Report to the Congress from the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia*, January 1962, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, F-6; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1957, 2.

²¹⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 2.

²¹⁵ I.M. Pei, "Urban Renewal in Southwest Washington," *Washington in Transition*, 68.

²¹⁶ All references to fiscal years refer to the RLA's fiscal year, which runs from July 1 through June 30.

²¹⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 5.

²¹⁸ D.C. Board of Commissioners, *State of the Nation's Capital*, January 1962, F-6.

delays, were “common experiences in the pioneering redevelopment undertakings throughout the country.”²¹⁹

Project Area C

EARLY PROGRESS

Shortly after progress got underway in Project Area B, headway was already being made on the second, and largest, Southwest redevelopment project – Area C. On June 26, 1953, the NCPC adopted the area’s initial boundaries. The Board of Commissioners approved these two months later.²²⁰ Project Area C initially encompassed 162.5 acres “lying between Maine Avenue on the west and South Capitol Street and Delaware Avenue on the east, and between Eye Street on the north and P Street on the south.”²²¹ Later, its boundaries would be expanded to the north, beyond the railroad tracks, and a 30.5-acre portion would also be carved out as Project Area C-1. Thus, Project Area C ultimately encompassed approximately 442 acres – including all of the expanded Survey Area except Project Areas B and C-1.²²²

The conditions in Project Area C were not as severe as in Project Area B, but they were still deemed in need of significant redevelopment. The table below compares the conditions and characteristics between the two areas, as well as Project Area C-1:²²³

	Area B	Area C	Area C-1
Population	5,104	17,690	622
Percent Black	97.5%	59.2%	98.9%
Population per Family	3.7	4.0	3.6
Dwelling Units	1,370	4,316	200
Percent Sub-Standard	79.8%	76.0%	85.0%
Percent Owner-Occupied	12.8%	18.4%	14.7%
Average Monthly Rent	\$29.78	\$39.55	\$31.24
Rooms per Unit	4.0	4.3	3.2

In addition, an earlier survey of Project Area C, when it included only 162.5 acres, found that, while plumbing was generally better than in Project Area B, electricity and heating conditions were slightly worse:²²⁴

	Project Area B	Project Area C
No inside toilet	57.8%	47.8%

²¹⁹ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 30.
²²⁰ Ibid.
²²¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1953, 7.
²²² Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 30.
²²³ Discrepancies between Project Area B figures in the Area B and Area C plans must reflect updated information at the time of Area C Plan preparation; U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix A 3.
²²⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1953, v.

No inside running water	31.3%	20.1%
No installed bath	60.3%	36.2%
No wash basin or installed laundry tub	82.2%	62.3%
No electricity installed	29.3%	16.5%
No central heating installed	83.8%	72.2%

A later survey of the portion of Project Area C lying north of the railroad tracks found similar, to slightly worse, conditions there. For example, 19 percent of the units had no running water and 51 percent had no installed bath.²²⁵

On September 1, 1953, the RLA requested Federal planning funds for the project area. These funds were approved on February 9, 1954, and finalized with a contract signed on April 27, 1954.²²⁶ In the midst of those funding negotiations, however, on September 1, 1953, developer William Zeckendorf, of the New York-based firm Webb & Knapp, presented the RLA with a redevelopment proposal for an expanded Area C.²²⁷ Zeckendorf was a nationally prominent figure in real estate development, and particularly in urban renewal, as it offered investment with “maximum leverage.”²²⁸

The firm signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the RLA on March 15, 1954. Under the provisions of the agreement, the RLA would refrain from negotiations with other developers on Project Area C for a period of one year. It would also work to obtain acceptance of the Tenth Street Mall concept – a requisite feature for Webb & Knapp’s participation on the project. In return, Webb & Knapp would develop detailed engineering, economic, and development studies for the proposed private use of the area (approximately 50 percent of the Project Area C land area).²²⁹

The Tenth Street Mall, or Promenade, or the L’Enfant Promenade (as it was later called), proved to be the key point of contention in the two-year negotiations that ensued, causing multiple extensions of the MOU’s period of existence. (The specific details of that debate are discussed in the section of this report that focuses on the L’Enfant Promenade.)

In March 1955, President Eisenhower asked the Honorable George A. Garrett, former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland and President of the Federal City Council (FCC), to take a leadership role in resolving the ongoing Project C conflicts in order to facilitate forward momentum with the project.²³⁰ On December 1, 1955, Garrett issued a report summarizing the significant progress that had been made in Project Area C discussions, including details of an

²²⁵ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix C-1.

²²⁶ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 30.

²²⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1954, 4.

²²⁸ Anderson Notter Finegold, Mariani and Associates, Bryant and Bryant, *Southwest Waterfront Study: Prepared Under Contract to the Federal City Council, for Presentation to the International Cultural and Trade Center Task Force* ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., September 1983), 117.

²²⁹ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 31.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1955, 8.

agreement that had been reached on all major questions.²³¹ As a result, on April 5, 1956, the NCPC approved the Webb & Knapp plan, along with its Project Area C boundaries.²³² On November 30, 1956 final approval was obtained through the endorsement of the D.C. Commissioners.²³³

PLAN DETAILS

A colorful and glossy Webb & Knapp planning publication said of its proposal, “The Webb & Knapp Plan, based on a realistic appraisal of urban scale and urban living, proposes no sharp break with tradition, retaining and regenerating the area’s best qualities.”²³⁴ While this is one way of describing its approach to reinvigorating the natural advantages of the Southwest’s waterfront location, it is far from an accurate portrayal of the overall plan. Clearly inspired by the Justement-Smith Plan – although it called for higher land uses and bigger taxes²³⁵ – the Zeckendorf Plan (as it came to be known) was a bold proposal for dramatically changing the character and amenities of the Southwest. Its authors were I.M. Pei and Harry Weese, who were both then staff architects at Webb & Knapp.²³⁶

The plan listed four elements as fundamental to its success: the Tenth Street Mall, the Plaza, the waterfront, and the residential neighborhood.²³⁷ For completeness, one might also add to this list the Town Center – the commercial and community hub for the new Southwest. The combination of these elements would help create links within the new Southwest community, as well as between it and the rest of the city, nation, and world. The price tag for this new community and its critical connections was placed at \$108,241,000, or a net cost after reuse of \$56,241,000.²³⁸

Residentially, the plan called for the construction of 2,300 to 2,800 dwelling units²³⁹ – figures that would later be increased. Half of these would come from six high-rise apartment buildings, whose units would be priced in the range of \$90 to \$150/month for efficiencies to two-bedroom units. 900 units would come from three-story row houses, which would be distributed around residential squares. These would target mid- to upper income families. Another approximately 500 units came from flats and walk-up rental apartments, although these might be minimized in favor of the ownership-oriented row houses.²⁴⁰ The residential character of the

²³¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1956, 2; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 4.

²³² U.S. NCPC, “Letter of Transmittal,” *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 1-2.

²³³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 13.

²³⁴ Webb & Knapp, *A Redevelopment Plan for Southwest Washington, D.C.: A Webb & Knapp Project* ([New York]: n.p., [195?]), 1.

²³⁵ George Beveridge, “Garrett Untangling Southwest Plans; Only 2 Courses of Mediation Seen,” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), [March 1955].

²³⁶ Wolf von Eckardt, “. . . for Every American Family,” in *A Place to Live: The Crisis of the Cities* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1967), 299.

²³⁷ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 15.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, Appendix B-1.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, Appendix A-2.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19-21.

community in the southeast corner of Project Area C, near the waterfront, would be supported by the elimination of Maine Avenue below M Street.²⁴¹

New churches, schools and other community facilities were also part of the plan for Project Area C. Many of these were incorporated into the Town Center plan. Others were linked with the community through neighborhood parks and streets.²⁴²

The commercial areas were clustered in the following areas: the waterfront, L'Enfant Plaza, L'Enfant Promenade, and the Town Center. Second commercial uses were clustered in two areas: between the expressway and the railroad tracks, and south of Randall Junior High School on South Capitol Street.²⁴³

The final major element of the plan was the development of new Federal buildings north of the railroad tracks. The inclusion of these buildings in the area was one of the differences between the Zeckendorf Plan and the Justement-Smith Plan.

The following table summarizes the 1954 Zeckendorf land use proposal for Project Area C, in comparison to the previous conditions of use:²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Webb & Knapp, 1.

²⁴² U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 22-23.

²⁴³ Webb & Knapp, 3.

²⁴⁴ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix A-1, Appendix E-10-11.

	Old Southwest		NCPC Proposal	
Vacant:	6	1%	0	0%
Residential:	94	21%	65.6	15%
High-Rise Apartments			16.9	
Row Houses, Flats, 2-3 Story Apts.			48.7	
Public and Semi-Public:	42	10%	95	22%
Schools & Recreation			19.4	
Parks			14.6	
Public Community Uses			2.3	
Public Building Sites			51.4	
Churches, Comm. Houses, Institutions			7.3	
First Commercial:	23	5%	39.4	9%
Town Center			13.7	
Waterfront			6.0	
Plaza			19.7	
Second Commercial:	61	14%	29.7	7%
General			25.3	
Railroad			4.4	
Streets and Alleys:	216	49%	211.9	48%
Expressway			160.5	
Other			51.4	
Total acres:	442	100%	441.6	100%

PROJECT EXECUTION

Following approval of the plan, a Project Area C loan and grant contract was signed with the HHFA on January 7, 1957.²⁴⁵ Shortly after, on January 11, 1957, the RLA acquired the first parcels of land in Project Area C – these first five squares later would be used for the construction of Federal buildings.²⁴⁶ Among the privately developed properties, however, the first activities focused on Town Center.²⁴⁷ By mid-1961, the RLA estimated that 99.6 percent of the Southwest land acquisition was complete, 99.9 percent of the residents had been relocated, and 96.7 percent of the demolition was finished. Although the District Board of Commissioners estimated in 1962 that work in Project Area C would be completed by October 1965, several structures, including buildings around L’Enfant Plaza and restaurants along the waterfront, were not completed until as late as 1973.

²⁴⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1957, 2.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁴⁷ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 32.

In practice, the long road to completion of Project Area C was not as straightforward as simply following the plan. For example, in 1960, Zeckendorf decided to split the development of Project Area C with other developers, retaining for himself the area north of M Street.²⁴⁸ Thus, the area south of M Street was broken up into six different parcels, several of which were eventually awarded based on design competitions. As a result, the character of the individual residential communities today is less a function of the original Zeckendorf Plan than preferences and styles of the new developers and their architects.²⁴⁹

Then, in the early part of that same decade, Webb & Knapp began experiencing economic difficulties that eventually led it to file for bankruptcy. As a result, Zeckendorf had to sell off many of his remaining Southwest properties, including the mid-1964 sales of his undeveloped residential properties and Town Center (both of which were purchased by the developers Bresler & Reiner).²⁵⁰ Several months later, he had to sell his last property, L'Enfant Plaza,²⁵¹ which was purchased by a syndicate including George A. Garrett, first president of Washington's Federal City Council; David Rockefeller; John D. Rockefeller III; Wiley T. Buchanan, Jr.; Lazard Freres & Co.; Gerry Brothers and Co.; and others.²⁵² This new developer, which called itself L'Enfant Plaza Corporation, continued to retain I.M. Pei and Partners to design the first pair of buildings constructed on the site.²⁵³

In addition to facing economic issues within its own organization, Webb & Knapp, as well as the RLA, was also plagued by pockets of controversy during the course of the execution of Project Area C. Foremost among these were conflicts over the exclusivity of Webb & Knapp's MOU agreement, the process of determining land acquisition prices, and the levels of resale prices to future tenants of the waterfront.

On the first count, an RLA audit report by the Comptroller General offered strong criticism of the RLA's decision to deal exclusively with one developer. It issued three recommendations for conducting developer negotiations in future urban renewal projects:

- (1) Discontinue the practice of negotiating with only one potential private redeveloper
- (2) Publicize the availability of land and invite competitive bids or proposals
- (3) Refuse to accept redevelopment plans prepared by a private redeveloper if such acceptance obliges the RLA to negotiate only with such redeveloper.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ Goode, 9.

²⁴⁹ U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 320-321

²⁵⁰ Jack Eisen, "Town Center is Sold by Webb-Knapp," *Washington Post*, 25 July 1963; Helen Dewar, "Builder to Change Southwest Design," *Washington Post*, 27 July 1964.

²⁵¹ George Lardner Jr. and Jack Eisen, "Webb-Knapp Sells Last SW Parcel," *Washington Post*, 3 November 1964.

²⁵² Robert J. Lewis, "Construction Nears on L'Enfant Plaza," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 1965.

²⁵³ Karen Greer, "The Renewal of Southwest Washington," unpublished manuscript, [1988], 16.

²⁵⁴ U.S. Comptroller General of the U.S., *Report to the Congress of the United States: Audit of District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency, Fiscal Years 1957 and 1958* (Washington, DC: GAO, May 1959), Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, 5.

These were essentially the operating conditions during negotiations for Project Area B. However, with the second project area, the influence of a single, powerful developer, intent on single-handedly controlling one of the biggest land dispositions in urban renewal history, led to a different course of conduct. Moreover, the delays that resulted in the ironing out of this agreement over several years ultimately cost the city significant sums of money – due to the fact that the land sat vacant, without earning any rent, and without the future developer paying any taxes, until contracts were signed. Had there been multiple developers, with less bargaining power, some parts might have been developed separately, and more favorable economic outcomes might have resulted.

On the second count, the case of the Town Center best illustrates the difficulties and ambiguities surrounding the establishment of land acquisition prices, as well as the perceived privileging of certain developers over others. In September 1956, Webb & Knapp submitted its first proposal for Town Center, agreeing to refer land valuation to the RLA's Real Estate Advisory Board (REAB). The RLA offered the land at the REAB's recommended \$4 per square foot price tag in June 1957. The next month, Webb & Knapp rejected this offer and proposed a price of \$1.25 per square foot, to which the RLA's appraisers countered in October with a revised valuation of \$2.50 per square foot. In January 1958, Webb & Knapp accepted this offer, while the RLA simultaneously turned down an outside offer from the newly formed Town Center, Inc., which had offered to pay \$4 per acre. The RLA justified its actions by stating that it was already in the midst of good-faith negotiations with Webb & Knapp when this second offer was made. At a March 1959 public hearing on the land disposition, the RLA turned down another \$4 offer – this time from Morris B. Cafritz – on the grounds that it was not timely. Also at this time, in the midst of the land disposition hearings, the RLA set the maximum Webb & Knapp land price at \$3 per acre, which the developers accepted as the final price in May. Based on this final price, two 99-year leases were executed on June 2, 1959.²⁵⁵

Despite the fact that the two sides eventually met in the middle on the price, several arguments were made to suggest that this price point was still too low. For example, while the RLA's general practice was to require that appraisers base their valuations on the "highest and best" use of the land within the stipulations of the plan, in the case of Webb & Knapp, they typically based the appraisal instead on their plan, rather than on any additional upside potential for the land use. Later independent appraisals of the land resulted in alternative prices of \$4.50-\$5.00 and \$10.00 respectively for the land, further suggesting that sizeable potential income may have been lost through the sale of land to Webb & Knapp at \$3 per acre at Town Center.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 33; General Accounting Office, "Summary of Land Dispositions in Southwest Project Area C to Various Webb & Knapp Corporations by the District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency," in United States. Congress. House. Committee on the District of Columbia, *Urban Renewal in the District of Columbia, House of Representatives; Hearings Before Subcommittee No. 4 of the Committee on the District of Columbia, House of Representatives, Eighty-Eighth Congress, Second Session on the Urban Renewal Program for the District of Columbia; November 17 and 18, 1964* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964), 2485-2487.

²⁵⁶ General Accounting Office, "Summary of Land Dispositions ...," in U.S. Congress. House. Committee on the D.C. RLA, 2488-2490.

Finally, in a third area of contention, concerned businesses that wished to return to the waterfront argued that they were being economically prohibited from leasing land there.

Project Area C-1

EARLY PROGRESS

Project Area C-1 was originally part of Project Area C, but it was separated apart in 1955 when it was determined that, given the lack of development complexities on its 30.5 acres, it could be more expeditiously developed if it was treated separately.²⁵⁷ This separation also made geographic sense given that public housing and Project Area B already physically isolated the property from the rest of Project Area C. The boundaries of this third project area were roughly Eye Street on the north, Capitol Street South on the east, M Street on the south, and Delaware Avenue on the west. In February 1955, the NCPC took the first steps to enact the creation of this new area.²⁵⁸ By December 1955, the Planning Commission had approved the plan,²⁵⁹ and the D.C. Commissioners approved it on March 15, 1956.²⁶⁰

The former inhabitants of the area included sixteen businesses²⁶¹ and 622 residents. 98.9 percent of these residents were black. The residents resided in 200 dwelling units, 85 percent of which (the highest of all of the project areas) were substandard. Only 14.7 percent of the units were owner-occupied.²⁶²

PLAN DETAILS

The plan for Project Area C-1 involved both clearance and rehabilitation. Almost 80 percent of its twenty-four parcels were to go to the District of Columbia for various community uses. These included the continued use of the Anthony Bowen Elementary School, and the construction of a fire station, an automobile inspection station, and a park (the Lansburgh Neighborhood Park). Only two of the parcels were planned for residential usage, and the remainder would be privately developed. Some of the private commercial properties that resulted were the Skyline Inn, the Miller-Dudley Building, and the Bernstein Building. The following table summarizes the total planned land use of the area.²⁶³

	NCPC Plan	
Residential	1.8	5.9%
Community Facilities	9.3	30.5%
Schools	4.2	13.8%
Parks	1.9	6.2%

²⁵⁷ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 36.

²⁵⁸ Robert C. Albrook, "NCPC Has New Road Plan for Southwest," *Washington Post*, 5 February 1955.

²⁵⁹ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 36.

²⁶⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 13.

²⁶¹ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 37.

²⁶² NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix A-3.

²⁶³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 12.

D.C. Services	3.2	10.5%
Second Commercial	4.5	14.8%
Streets and Alleys	14.9	48.9%
<u>Total acres</u>	<u>30.5</u>	<u>100%</u>

PROJECT EXECUTION

Following plan approval, it then took two years for the HHFA to grant the RLA the funding they needed for the project. These delays were caused by legal difficulties, such as Federal real estate tax exemption laws and an HHFA policy of charging the first project within a planning area all of the planning costs – too costly of a burden for the small C-1 area versus the large Project Area C cost base.²⁶⁴ Finally, by May 1957, the project reached the execution phase, with the RLA's acquisition of the property of Esso Standard Oil Co. This land was then transferred to the developer, the 67 K Corp., which then leased the property to the Miller-Dudley Co., Inc.²⁶⁵ Thus, more than two years after the decision was made to “fast track” the project,²⁶⁶ Project Area C-1 became the first and last of the Southwest urban renewal project areas to reach execution. The project was completed in 1963.²⁶⁷

III. Redevelopment Structures and Sites

Residential Buildings

Buildings Spared

As discussed in the section on old Southwest, the vast majority of the area's former housing was in extremely dilapidated condition. Thus, despite advocacy by Peets, and Goodwillie before him, in favor of rehabilitation, very few of these buildings were saved from the wrecking ball.

In the early 1990s, the D.C. Historic Preservation Division commissioned a survey of all of the historic structures and sites dating prior to 1950 that survived Southwest's urban renewal. The survey identified six such buildings within the urban renewal area that its authors considered “significant to the history of the District of Columbia and/or . . . a sole surviving or exceptional form of architecture for the project area.” It labeled these as “Rank 1.” Four of these Rank 1 structures were rehabilitated during urban renewal for use as residential and community structures.²⁶⁸ They are discussed below, as well as in the sections on the residential complexes

²⁶⁴ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 36.

²⁶⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1957, 9.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ D.C. Board of Commissioners, *State of the Nation's Capital*, January 1962, F-6.

²⁶⁸ Varna G. Boyd and Louana M. Lackey, “Archaeological and Architectural Evaluation and Recommendations,” in Elizabeth A. Moore and Charles W. McNett, Eds., *Archaeological Survey of the Southwest*

into which they have been incorporated. The other two Rank 1 structures were religious buildings. Although the survey identified forty-six structures that it classified as Rank 2 or 3,²⁶⁹ most of these buildings were located outside the redevelopment area, in the southeast corner of the quadrant.

In its 1959 annual report, the RLA described four residential/community buildings as being “of historic architectural importance” and committed to “make every effort to preserve these houses and to encourage appropriate development on adjacent sites.”²⁷⁰ The buildings to which they were referring were the four Rank 1 residential/community structures: the Thomas Law House, the Duncanson-Cranch House, Wheat Row, and the Edward Simon Lewis House.

Thomas Law House (HABS No. DC-20)

The Thomas Law House, located at 1252 Sixth Street, is a Federal-era house constructed between 1794 and 1796. Architect William Loring designed this brick building for the Greenleaf Syndicate speculators. It was leased by Thomas Law, who married Eliza Park Curtis, granddaughter of Martha Washington. It later served as a hotel in the 1860s and a clinic after 1929. In 1965, during urban renewal, it was rehabilitated and incorporated it into the Tiber Island complex as the Honeymoon House, or the Tiber Island Center for Cultural and Community Activities.²⁷¹ It is currently open for use by residents of the Tiber Island and Carrollsburg Square complexes.

Duncanson-Cranch House (HABS No. DC-128)

The Duncanson-Cranch House, located at 468-70 N Street, is a Federal-era house constructed from 1794 to 1795. Working for the Greenleaf Syndicate speculators, architect William Loring designed this brick double house to look like a single unit. It served as the headquarters of the Barney Neighborhood House from 1904 to 1960. Between 1964 and 1966, it was rehabilitated and incorporated into the Harbour Square complex as townhouses.²⁷²

Wheat Row (DC-10)

Wheat Row, located at 1315-1321 Fourth Street, is a Federal-era house constructed ca. 1794. Working for the Greenleaf Syndicate speculators, architect William Loring designed this brick four-unit house to look like a single unit. It would go on to become an intact row of

Quadrant of the District of Columbia. Submitted to The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Division ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., August 1992), D.C. HPO, 255.

²⁶⁹ According to the study, a Rank 2 structure “is either a rare example of a particular form of architecture from the 19th Century which has been altered to the point that its historic and architectural integrity is in question, or it is a 20th Century structure which was designed by well known architects or has other architectural significance to the SW quadrant.” A Rank 3 structure “is significant because it was constructed prior to 1950 and survived redevelopment” and typically is characterized by alterations and/or poor structural condition; Boyd and Lackey, 257-258.

²⁷⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 16.

²⁷¹ Alison K. Hoagland, “Thomas Law House,” HABS DC-20, 6 July 1983: 3.

²⁷² Alison K. Hoagland, “Duncanson-Cranch House,” HABS DC-128, 24 June 1983: 3.

some of Washington, D.C.'s earliest townhouses. Between 1964 and 1965, it was rehabilitated and incorporated into the Harbour Square complex as townhouses.²⁷³

Edward Simon Lewis House (DC-26)

The Edward Simon Lewis House, located at 456 N Street, is a Federal-style house constructed ca. 1817. The architect is unknown; the building's notable former residents include journalists Ernie Pyle and Lewis J. Heath. Between 1964 and 1967, it was rehabilitated and incorporated into the Harbour Square complex as a townhouse.²⁷⁴

General Description of New Structures

The predominantly Modernist architectural style and planning that characterize the housing developments of Southwest's urban renewal truly make them a product of their era. They were also innovative for their day in their utilization of design competitions for the development of three of the ten newly built housing complexes. Philip Will, Jr., then President of the AIA, called one such competition, "the best conducted competition of which I have any personal knowledge and could serve as a model for other urban renewal agencies."²⁷⁵ Beyond design alone, the housing developments were also innovative in their policy on residential racial segregation, offering, "the first new high quality housing in Washington marketed on an open occupancy basis."²⁷⁶

The housing developments ultimately proved successful from an occupancy perspective, with over 98 percent of their units either rented or sold by 1970²⁷⁷ (with similarly high occupancy rates throughout the building process). Even today, many residents continue to hold the Southwest's housing complexes in high regard, calling them the one truly successful element of the urban renewal construction. The minimal number of current plans to change this housing – in the midst of myriad plans to drastically alter and fix the errors of past redevelopment on the waterfront, at Waterside Mall, and around L'Enfant Plaza – seems to further support the durability and successfulness of these residential communities.

Housing Types

In the 1957 *Fortune* article "Are Cities Un-American?" William H. Whyte, Jr. included a sketch of residential complex that incorporated both high-rise towers and low-rise townhouses. The caption beneath the sketch reads, "No one has built a combination tower and garden duplex block of this kind, but a number of architects feel that something like it would be more economical than the standard project – and a lot more pleasant to live in."²⁷⁸ It was exactly this

²⁷³ Druscilia J. Null, "Wheat Row," HABS DC-10, 24 August 1983: 3.

²⁷⁴ Alison K. Hoagland, "Edward Simon Lewis House," HABS DC-26, 7 July 1983: 3.

²⁷⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 20.

²⁷⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 9.

²⁷⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 23.

²⁷⁸ William H. Whyte, Jr., "Are Cities Un-American?" *Fortune* 24 (September 1957): 127.

type of combined development that marked the vast majority of Southwest's residential complexes.

The housing types built in the renewal area consisted primarily of high-rise elevator apartment buildings, row houses (or townhouses), two-three story apartment houses (buildings with three or more apartments), and flats (buildings with two apartments). Among these, the high-rise units dominate, encompassing roughly 75 percent of the approximately 5,600 new or rehabilitated housing units from Southwest's urban renewal. The *Washington Post's* real estate reporter at the time described the townhouse being developed as "the row house or attached house with new exterior design within new land plans and at locations ranging from midtown to far extensions of suburbia . . . the town house is a 1966-style row hose."²⁷⁹ In the minority are those units designed for moderate-income families, which make up less than seven percent of the units.

Most of the housing communities were constructed on superblocks, with smaller streets and alleys being closed to create communal open space. Through these superblocks, both high-rise and townhouse residents benefited from communal ownership and/or usage of central open space, or residential squares. The RLA believed that these residential squares might also encourage home ownership by recapturing some of the advantages of rental properties in common area management. The Town Square townhouses and apartments are a notable exception to this trend toward residential squares, as they were constructed principally along the existing boulevards of Eye, Sixth, and G streets.

Housing cooperatives were a second device for encouraging home ownership, bringing high-rise units into the realm of property ownership. These cooperatives were also eligible for Federally insured mortgage financing.²⁸⁰ River Park was one of the first communities to exploit this ownership model, and it has since spread to many other complexes in Southwest.

While the superblock concept was relatively new, the urban row house was a revival of a housing concept that dated back centuries. Planners of the day found the row house to be extremely well adapted to the automobile, permitting construction to the street-line, next to street-side parking, with a maximum of open space in the back yard. These structures were also economically appealing in terms of their minimization of street-side utility costs and their increase in land usage versus detached housing, socially appealing for middle-income families with children, and aesthetically appealing for the community by making the street an interesting architectural space.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ John B. Willmann, "Town House Comes Back Strong," *Washington Post*, 19 February 1966, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

²⁸⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 15.

²⁸¹ "Row Houses for Cities," *Architectural Forum* 106 (May 1957): 149; Jane Jacobs, "Washington: 20th Century Capital?" *Architectural Forum* 104 (January 1956): 98.

In terms of size, the housing units ranged from studios in the high-rise apartment buildings to four-bedroom townhouses.²⁸² The apartment towers were typically oriented toward singles and couples, while the townhouses were intended mainly for families.

Housing Prices

Although new housing in Southwest was originally intended to span virtually a full range of income levels, from lower middle income to upper income, the majority of housing constructed was oriented toward middle or upper income residents. The redevelopment plan for Project Area B had included an early provision for rental housing priced at \$17 per room per month, but that stipulation was removed in 1959 when it proved to costly and difficult to enact. Advocates of the revocation also cited the fact that alternative housing was already available in the city for this \$4,500 to \$8,000 annual income group.²⁸³ Only in 1966 did the RLA first turn its attention to dealing with this economic class, through construction of the Channel Square complex and rehabilitation of the St. James Mutual Homes.

Buildings of the New Southwest

This survey describes the new and rehabilitated housing located in the Southwest urban renewal area. It does not, however, include any public housing complexes as none previously existed or were built in the urban renewal area. Rather, tracts for public housing were physically removed from the boundary areas. Some complexes, such as James Creek Dwellings, located to the southeast of the urban renewal area at First and O streets, date back to a period prior to urban renewal. Other communities, such as Greenleaf Gardens, located on the area bounded by Eye, N, Second, and Third streets, were constructed during the redevelopment era, but were located on land that was physically removed from the urban renewal bounds. These complexes played important roles as sites for the relocation of eligible former Southwest residences. However, because they are located outside the urban renewal boundaries, they are not discussed in detail.

The following section provides a brief description of each of the major housing complexes of the new Southwest. The first nine communities – from Capitol Park to Waterside Towers – represent the chronologically ordered middle to upper income private residential housing communities. Except for Town Center Plaza, all included both high-rise apartment buildings and smaller scale townhouses. Except for the townhouses at Town Square, all were Modernist in design. The last two communities – Channel Square and St. James Mutual Homes – were the only moderate income communities built in the new Southwest. Of the entire list, only St. James Mutual Homes was a rehabilitation of existing structures, rather than an entirely new construction.

²⁸² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 10.

²⁸³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 15.

Capitol Park

Capitol Park was the first residential complex to be built in the new Southwest. It first introduced into Southwest a style of architecture that mixed high-rise apartment buildings with row houses arranged around a common area. The complex is located between Half & Fourth streets, Eye Street, and the Southwest Expressway. The architect for the first structure was the firm Satterlee and Smith, while Chloethiel Smith and Associates designed later elements. The landscape architect was Daniel Urban Kiley. Stevens and Scheuer were the developers, and HRH Construction Co. did most of the construction work. Construction began in 1956, the first building was completed in 1959, and the entire complex was finished in 1963.

The complex consists of 1,738 residential units, distributed between 1,339 elevator apartment units in five high-rise buildings and 399 row houses and walk-ups.²⁸⁴ The component structures include five high-rises – Capitol Park Apartments (now Potomac Place), Capitol Park Towers, Capitol Park Twin Towers (two buildings), and Capitol Park Plaza – and two townhouse complexes – Capitol Park II and Capitol Park IV.

Capitol Park was built on the site of Dixon's Court, the most notorious of the former alley dwelling communities in the old Southwest. It was the first of the racially integrated housing complexes in Southwest – a first for Washington, D.C. Racial integration became a requirement in all of the residential developments of the new Southwest.

As for the accommodations, the apartment units were geared primarily towards single career-persons, while the townhouses were intended for families. Each apartment unit has its own balcony, which is decoratively detailed with tile screens and entered via sliding glass window-doors. The facades of the buildings also show lattice patterns in the brickwork and emphasize their brick and terra cotta materials to create a “domestic” feel.²⁸⁵ The designs on the facades of the townhouses coordinate slightly with those of the high-rises, although the brick on the townhouses has been painted in pastel colors, while that of the apartment buildings is red or light tan.

The apartment buildings are nine stories in height, with a glassed in non-residential lobby floor called a “no-story,” located below the rest of the building. This ground floor glass lobby, with habitable floors raised above on pilotis, is reminiscent of Modernist designs by Le Corbusier, among others. Capitol Park was Washington, D.C.'s first nine-story apartment tower,²⁸⁶ and this designation of the no-story was important in getting around the Washington, D.C., zoning restriction of an eight-story maximum. It also elevated apartment residents above the height of nearby townhouses, addressing privacy issues surrounding these building types' juxtaposition. The orientation of most townhouses' balconies away from the apartment buildings further increases privacy.

²⁸⁴ Southwest Community Council and Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, *Southwest Guide, 1965-1966* (Washington, D.C.: Kirby Lithographic Company, 1965), 12.

²⁸⁵ Goode, 409.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 408.

Other zoning and financing restrictions required similar creativity as that employed in developing the “no-story.” For example, by placing the supporting pillars of a pavilion in a wading pool, the pool became eligible for mortgage assistance. Of course, the pool only passed the review of the Department of Public Health when the property owner agreed to stock it with mosquito-eating *Gambusia* fish.²⁸⁷ Having endured the bureaucratic hassles involved in mixing urban renewal with D.C. zoning regulations, Chloethiel Woodard Smith commented that simple density and utility specifications, along with the requirement that plans be approved by the RLA, should be the only zoning restrictions in an urban renewal area of this sort.²⁸⁸

Landscaping, as designed by Dan Kiley, was an integral element of the park-like housing complex. In addition to the wading pool, the grounds included canopied pavilions, open green space, and a 37' x 8' glass mosaic mural by Leo Lionni. (Today, however, all of these features have either been eliminated or moved in order to make space for additional building construction). The glass lobbies of the apartment towers align with key corridors of the landscaping, such as the former H Street East-West corridor – to unite the interior and exterior. As soil conditions did not permit underground garages, parking is provided underneath the apartment buildings and on lots on the grounds.²⁸⁹ Well after project completion, chain-link fencing was also added around the boundaries of some of the apartment towers complexes.

The Capitol Park development process began on December 8, 1953, when the RLA acquired its first parcel of property – 825 Third Street – the first parcel acquired in the entire Southwest urban renewal area. This parcel contained a two-story brick row house and 810 square feet of land, formerly owned by William J. Emmett of Southeast.²⁹⁰ Ground was broken for the first building on April 9, 1958,²⁹¹ and it was largely completed by the summer of the next year.²⁹² The overall complex was completed in 1963.

The completed complex received a variety of reviews. Most notably, it won several multiple awards, including an AIA merit award in 1960 for Capitol Park Apartments and an FHA Honor Award for the Capitol Park II townhouses.²⁹³ *Architectural Forum* also praised the architects' and developer's daring spirit in taking a risk on the area and in pursuing creative design solutions to do that. Its authors wrote that Satterlee and Smith had “proved that perseverance, imagination, and idealism can produce good design over almost any bureaucratic obstacles.” In addition, architecture critic Wolf von Eckardt wrote that its townhouses are “even more titillating and important architecturally than any avant-garde effort would have been. In a manner so pleasing it becomes positively exciting, they manage to combine an appeal to familiar

²⁸⁷ “First Step Toward a New Washington” *Architectural Forum* 111 (December 1959): 118.

²⁸⁸ Jane Jacobs, 101.

²⁸⁹ *AIA Journal*, April 1960, quoted in Design Research, 30.

²⁹⁰ Richard L. Lyons, “Land Agency Buys 1st Area B Property,” *Washington Post*, 9 December 1953.

²⁹¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 8.

²⁹² Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 28.

²⁹³ Protopappas, John J. and Lin Brown, Eds., *Washington on Foot: 24 Walking Tours of Washington D.C., Old Town Alexandria, and Historic Annapolis*. (Washington, D.C.: National Capital Area Chapter American Planning Association, 1984), 57-58; “Honor Awards 1960-1969,” *AIA Home Page*, http://www.aia.org/library/honors_1960_1969.asp#list, accessed 6 July 2004.

associations of prettiness with our intellectual demands on honest modern architecture.”²⁹⁴ On a less positive note, *Architectural Forum* also commented on the excessive costs – in terms of time, effort, and money – required to make it possible, cautioning that urban renewal was not yet easy or profitable for developers and that isolated efforts would not succeed without being part of a larger scheme.²⁹⁵

CAPITOL PARK APARTMENTS (POTOMAC PLACE)

Capitol Park Apartments was the first structure to be completed in the urban renewal of Southwest. This high-rise building, located at 800 Fourth Street, is now called Potomac Place Apartments. This structure and its site was the first testing ground for many of the legal, technical, and economic issues of the Capitol Park complex and of Southwest’s urban renewal overall. It was completed in mid-1959.²⁹⁶

Six months after construction was completed, only half of the units were rented, due in part to the building’s pioneering status. At that time, its grounds were physically surrounded by substantial construction activity, many potential future residents were uncertain as to what the new Southwest would be like. Moreover, the building existed as an isolated island within a sea of construction, without even adequate shopping facilities. This was due to the successful effort by the developer of the adjoining Project Area C, Webb & Knapp, to alter project area plans to consolidate all shopping in one location on its own property, and construction of that shopping center had been delayed. Once progress improved, however, the building quickly filled. However, none of the occupants that moved were members of the lower-middle class. Indeed, Capitol Park Apartments was the site at which the RLA initially tried to test, and later rescinded, the idea of offering one third of residential units at the affordable rent level of \$17 per room per month.

President Eisenhower played several parts in the history of Capitol Park Apartments. First, he sent congratulations to the ground breaking ceremony, lending greater significance to the occasion. In addition, he toured Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev through the completed complex in 1959, showcasing the development as an example of the United States’ progress in eliminating slums.

OTHER HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

The other apartment buildings, all of which were smaller than Capitol Park Apartments, were completed over the next six years. By fiscal year 1962, construction was in progress on Capitol Park Twin Towers, located at 101 and 103 G St., and Capitol Park Towers (one building), located at 301 G Street.²⁹⁷ The Towers was completed in August 1962,²⁹⁸ and the Twin Towers were completed in summer 1963. The Towers contains 289 units, and the Twin

²⁹⁴ Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 301-302.

²⁹⁵ “First Step Toward a New Washington,” 115.

²⁹⁶ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 28.

²⁹⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 10.

²⁹⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 15.

Towers, which are connected by a ground-level enclosed passageway, contain a combined 320 units.²⁹⁹ Capitol Park Plaza, located at 201 Eye Street, opened in 1965 as the last of the Capitol Park high-rises. It contains 338 units.³⁰⁰

TOWNHOUSES

Two sub-communities – Capitol Park II and Capitol Park IV – contain the townhouses. Capitol Park II, the older of the two communities, is situated on 3.29 acres between Third, G, and I streets.³⁰¹ It includes seven structures, with eighty-one single-family townhouses.³⁰² Construction began in May 1960 and completed in fiscal year 1961. A considerable delay occurred prior to the start of construction due to mortgage disagreements between the developers and the Federal Housing Association. Amendments to Section 220 of the Housing Act of 1959, however, cleared the way for progress to be made.³⁰³ Capitol Park IV, bounded by Third and G streets and Delaware Avenue, includes 319 units in 242 townhouses on 6.05 acres.³⁰⁴ Both communities are condominiums today.

Town Center Plaza

Town Center Plaza was the first residential complex to be completed in Project Area C. It includes four identical high-rise apartment buildings located between Third, Sixth, Eye, and M streets, with the Waterside Mall situated in the middle between two pairs of buildings on its east and west. The address of the eastern pair is 1001 - 1101 Third Street, and that of the western pair is 1000 - 1100 Sixth Street. Gorsuch Methodist Church and the dwellings of Casey's Alley, Fairfax Court, and Allens Court formerly occupied the overall Town Center site.³⁰⁵ I.M. Pei designed the structures, and Webb & Knapp was the developer. The four buildings include a total of 512 elevator apartment units,³⁰⁶ consisting primarily of efficiencies.³⁰⁷ In 1981, the tenants of Town Center Plaza West purchased their two buildings to form a cooperative.³⁰⁸ They are now known as Marina View Towers.

The buildings are unique within the Southwest, as they are the only apartment buildings that lack balconies and accompanying townhouses. Their facades are dominated by near floor-to-ceiling tinted glass panels and a lattice of concrete structural support. The uniform interior curtains (in the east buildings) and vertical blinds (in the west buildings) become almost a de

²⁹⁹ James R. McBee, "Potomac Place Historic Preservation Review Board Application for Historic Landmark or Historic District Designation," 16 January 2003, D.C. SHPO, section 7, page 2.

³⁰⁰ Ibid..

³⁰¹ Ibid..

³⁰² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 23.

³⁰³ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 28.

³⁰⁴ McBee, section 7, page 2.

³⁰⁵ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, Volume 2 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1959), 246, 247.

³⁰⁶ D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area," memo, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers.

³⁰⁷ Pamela Scott and Antoinette J. Lee, *Buildings of the District of Columbia* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 244.

³⁰⁸ *Southwester*, April 1981.

facto part of the exterior façade. The structures incorporate the same no-story with pilotis and glassed-in ground-floor lobbies as Smith employed at Capitol Park. While architectural critic Wolf Von Eckardt criticized the towers as “a bit self-consciously glassy, bare, and square,”³⁰⁹ the FHA recognized the design with an FHA Honor Award for Residential Design.³¹⁰

As with Capitol Park, the development process at Town Center Plaza experienced significant delays. One of the most controversial of these surrounded disagreement over land values, as previously discussed in the section Project Area C.³¹¹

Construction on the first pair of apartment buildings, Town Center Plaza East, began on January 15, 1960³¹² and finished in 1961. By mid-1961, they were 65.5 percent occupied.³¹³ Construction on the two buildings of Town Center Plaza West began in fiscal year 1961 and was completed in January 1962.³¹⁴

River Park

At River Park, architect Charles M. Goodman continued the Capitol Park tradition of combining high-rise and townhouse communities, although he distinguished his development from that of Chloethiel Woodard Smith most notably in his choice of materials and shapes. River Park was also the Southwest’s first cooperative, an ownership model adopted by many of the new developments later in their lifetime. Bounded by Third, Fourth, N, and O streets, and located at 1301 Delaware Avenue, the development includes 518 residential units, divided between 384 apartment units in a single high-rise building and 134 adjacent townhouses.³¹⁵ The First Church of Christ (Holiness) and the dwellings of McLean Avenue formerly occupied the site.³¹⁶ Construction began in the second half of 1961 and completed in March 1963.³¹⁷

Owing to the material interests of the project’s developer, Reynolds Metal Company, aluminum is the defining material of the River Park complex. Seeking to join its competitor, ALCOA, in demonstrating the potential for aluminum in residential construction, Reynolds asked Goodman, who had worked previously for ALCOA, to incorporate aluminum into the complex as much as reasonably possible. Thus, the material is used for the construction of “window frames, doors, sunscreens, garden fences, outdoor sculpture, and staircases,”³¹⁸ serving both structurally and decoratively.

River Park is often referred to as a town within a town. Goodman specifically tried to create an urban, human-scale feel, carefully arranging the townhouses in the central open space,

³⁰⁹ Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 304.

³¹⁰ Protopappas and Brown, 53.

³¹¹ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 32.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 24.

³¹⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 13.

³¹⁵ Protopappas and Brown, 57.

³¹⁶ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 262.

³¹⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 23; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 9; SCC and SWNA, 12.

³¹⁸ Scott and Lee, 242.

with the high rise situated to the side³¹⁹ as a physical barrier between the development and the public housing complex on the other side of Delaware Avenue. The location and large size of the high-rise was also influenced by the size and shape of the site, combined with the density requirements. A grand promenade separates the high-rise and the townhouses, and smaller paths weave between the townhouse structures. Parking is all at ground level, in lots located off to the side of the property, or adjacent to selected townhouses along the outer edges.

The high-rise is nine stories high, with glass-enclosed lobbies, community rooms, and mailboxes on Smith's no-story level. Although it is often referred to as two buildings, with an open air space between two glass lobbies, it is actually one structure. Balconies, punched aluminum screens, and large glass panels mark the building's façade.

The townhouses are distinctive not only for their aluminum, but also for their barrel-shaped roofs. Goodman was opposed to having the high-rise residents look down on a sea of slab roofs and, although he considered high-pitched gable roofs as well barrel vaults, he preferred the barrels in the end for their attractiveness and variety.³²⁰ Some residents have complained, however, about issues of ventilating the barrel vaults. The townhouses were also painted a variety of colors and were oriented towards each other to benefit resident socialization.

In addition to building placement, River Park's community orientation was also reinforced by its cooperative status. This ownership structure enabled Reynolds – who was not primarily in the development business – to quickly extricate itself from the project. In addition, it also pushed residents to take a greater personal stake in the project's success. While the development's rules stipulated that 97 percent of the units had to be purchased before ownership would be transferred to the cooperative, ownership actually went through in fall 1963, with only 90 percent of the units sold.³²¹

As with other Southwest developments, the bold Modernist style at River Park received mixed reviews. The authors of *Buildings of the District of Columbia* criticized the bleak landscaping, particularly relative to the greener grounds of adjacent Carrollsburg Square.³²² However, *Progressive Architecture* praised the “lively” courtyards “in the richest urban tradition,”³²³ and Wolf Von Eckardt lauded its “medieval” character and remarked, “I have rarely seen the intimacy and delight of a medieval town so well captured with honestly modern means.”³²⁴

³¹⁹ *River Park and its Neighbors: 25 Years of Urban Renewal, 1963-1988: Panels on Southwest Redevelopment and River Park Mutual Homes Development. Saturday October 15, 1988* ([Washington, D.C.: Reynolds Metal Co., 1988]). 89.

³²⁰ *River Park and its Neighbors . . . Panels on Southwest Redevelopment and River Park Mutual Homes Development*, 89-90, 117.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 160-161.

³²² Scott and Lee, 242.

³²³ “Renewal by Reynolds,” *Progressive Architecture* (July 1963), 50.

³²⁴ Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 302.

Among the practical concerns of residents, the complex's location created several issues related to the Southwest's mixed-income status. While no River Park residents were members of the lower income class, the complex bordered on the property of a public housing complex to its east and eventually that of a middle-income complex to its south. From the early days, this caused some difficulties, including conflicts between the River Park pool and the poor young public housing residents who could do little more than watch their neighbors with envy. Today, as well, troubles continue as lower income residents use the River Park property as a thoroughfare and are suspected of causing minor acts of vandalism. Thus, residents are currently voting on whether or not to enclose the otherwise open community with a fence, as has already occurred at Capitol Park.

Tiber Island

The Tiber Island community is located slightly northwest of River Park, at 429 N Street, on the area bounded by M, N, Fourth, and Sixth streets. Union Alley, Union Court, Greenleaf Public School, and a Potomac Electric Power Company building formerly occupied the site.³²⁵ Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon were the architects, and Eric Paepcke was the landscape architect.³²⁶ Berens Companies developed the property, and the Charles H. Tompkins Construction Company built it. In total, the complex includes 455 residential units, split between 368 elevator apartments and eighty-seven townhouses. The apartments make up four eight-story high-rise towers, and the townhouses populate twenty-one two-three-story structures.³²⁷ Construction on the complex began in spring 1963 and was completed in 1965.³²⁸

Concrete and brick are the dominant materials of the complex. The apartment buildings employ "exposed reinforced concrete frames, filled in with gray-tan brick panels," and the townhouses use "brick bearing-wall construction, trimmed with precast concrete."³²⁹ These materials also dominate the landscape, including a large, eight and one-half-acre concrete central plaza built as the roof of the exclusively underground two-level parking garage. There is also a fountain in the middle of the plaza, and the towers are arranged perpendicular to each of its four sides. In addition to the central plaza, the townhouse residents enjoy private gardens. An emphasis on privacy, rather than socialization, as at River Park, led to the decision to orient many townhouse balconies toward blank walls. Moreover, recessed glass windows and concrete balcony facades are a dominant visual.³³⁰

As at River Park, the architects sought to integrate the apartment towers and townhouses into an urban and human-scale community, in this case with a pinwheel arrangement of the major forms.³³¹ Unlike Capitol Park, but similar to River Park, these forms were integrated by a

³²⁵ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 261-262.

³²⁶ Design Research, 32.

³²⁷ D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area;" *Tiber Island Home Page*, <http://tiberisland.com/tiberisland/>, accessed 2 July 2004.

³²⁸ Protopappas and Brown, 53.

³²⁹ Scott and Lee, 243.

³³⁰ "The 1966 Honor Awards," *AIA Journal* 46 (July 1966): 30-31.

³³¹ Scott and Lee, 242.

consistency of material and appearance. Shared facilities, such as the incorporation of the historic Thomas Law House as a community center, further tie the complex together. The complex is also unique in that it was the result of the first of four design competitions employed in Southwest – initiating a marked change in the method of land disposition in the area. In the competition, the panel of judges did not know the names of the interested firms, but simply judged the projects based on their designs. The Board of Directors preestablished land prices that were not subject to negotiation. This particular competition, which occurred in fiscal year 1962, involved eleven competitors.³³²

Another notable feature of Tiber Island, and its sister complex, Carrollsburg Square, is that its townhouses were the first condominiums to be sold in Washington, D.C., following the December 1963 legalization of condominiums.³³³ Since then, the apartments have been converted from rental units into cooperatives.

The Tiber Island complex was well received. In awarding the complex a 1966 Honor Award, the AIA jury praised the architects' achievement of "both monumentality and warmth by honest structure and knowledgeable use of materials," calling it an "outstanding example of a successful urban renewal project, and one which should inspire other developers and their architects."³³⁴ In his own review, local architecture critic Wolf von Eckardt described the complex's brutalist features, remarking that the architects "have taken all the brutality out of it without diminishing the strong vigor of their statement," achieving "a unity that [the Capitol Park and River Park] projects lack."³³⁵

Carrollsburg Square

Having also won the second design competition in Southwest, architects Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon designed a sister complex to Tiber Island on the opposite side of Fourth Street. This visually and materially similar complex, called, Carrollsburg Square, is located at 1250 Fourth St., on an area bounded by M, N, and Fourth streets and Delaware Avenue. The dwellings of M Place (or Van Street) formerly occupied the site.³³⁶ The landscape architect, developers, and construction company are all the same as at Tiber Island.³³⁷ The complex includes 387 apartments in three high-rise buildings, along with 140 townhouses.³³⁸ Construction began in March 1964³³⁹ and finished in 1965.³⁴⁰

The choice of materials and façade design of the buildings at Carrollsburg Square are virtually identical to those at Tiber Island. Moreover, both complexes also incorporate

³³² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 20.

³³³ Goode, 411.

³³⁴ "The 1966 Honor Awards," 30-31.

³³⁵ Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 303.

³³⁶ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 262.

³³⁷ Goode, 411.

³³⁸ D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area"; SCC and SWNA, 15.

³³⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1964, 6.

³⁴⁰ Protopappas and Brown, 57.

underground parking garages to preserve the pedestrian space at grade. It is at ground level, however, where the greatest variation between the two projects occurs. While sparse concrete dominates the plaza at Tiber Island, more greenery and vegetation were incorporated at Carrollsburg Square. In addition, rather than having a large plaza, Carrollsburg Square's grounds are divided up into less formal small courts and gardens.

In terms of ownership, Carrollsburg Square's townhouses, like those of Tiber Island, have always been condominiums. Today, the former rental apartment units have been converted to condominiums as well.

Harbour Square

Harbour Square was the second residential development in Southwest on which Chloethiel Woodard Smith worked, this time solely as part of her own firm, Chloethiel Woodard Smith and Associates. The property lies to the south of Tiber Island and west of River Park, at 500 N Street, and is bounded by Fourth, N, and O streets and the waterfront. Huntoon Court and Huntoon Place formerly occupied the site.³⁴¹ As at Smith's Capitol Park, the landscape architect was Daniel Urban Kiley. The developers were Shannon and Luchs and John McShain.³⁴² The complex consists of 465 total residential units, distributed between 448 elevator apartments, in three connected high-rise structures, and seventeen townhouses.³⁴³ These structures are located on 6.3 waterfront acres.³⁴⁴ Construction began in summer 1963³⁴⁵ and finished in 1966³⁴⁶

As at Capitol Park, landscaping was an important element. Even the pedestrian and automobile entrances and the motor court were carefully planned, including the hanging of plants above the motor court to create a garden feel.³⁴⁷ The bulk of the parking, however, is provided underground. A large grassy courtyard also surrounds a large water garden, which includes fountains, sculptures, seating, platforms, and water plant life. Willow trees abound as well, particularly as a western boundary between the complex and the waterfront promenade. Perhaps more than at any other residential complex, the housing at Harbour square is tightly connected with views of the Washington Channel.

The apartment towers form a U shape around the major courtyard. The apartments contained within have varied layouts (there are more than 300 floor plans), including some duplex configurations.³⁴⁸ Many units have balconies, as well as roof gardens. Smith once commented, "I never use windows where I can use doors,"³⁴⁹ and the French door-style windows

³⁴¹ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 262.

³⁴² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 23.

³⁴³ SCC and SWNA, 15; Goode, 426.

³⁴⁴ *Two on Two at the Octagon*, 8.

³⁴⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 19.

³⁴⁶ Protopappas and Brown, 54.

³⁴⁷ Scott and Lee, 242.

³⁴⁸ *Two on Two at the Octagon: Design for the Urban Environment, The Octagon, Washington, D.C., January 16 – March 18, 1979*, photocopy of exhibition program, D.C. HPO, 9.

³⁴⁹ Winzola McLendon, "Architect Designs No Ivory Towers," *Washington Post*, 30 July 1967, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

on the Harbour Square apartment buildings illustrate that preference in practice. The halls on which the apartments are located are only single-loaded, with windows on the other side. Thus, as the AIA noted in an exhibition brochure, “It extends the airiness of the apartments into public areas and destroys the ‘cell-like’ feeling of apartments that many buildings convey.”³⁵⁰ The townhouses line the outside of selected portions of the complex. In addition to newly constructed buildings, they also include the historic preservation of Wheat Row, the Duncanson-Cranch House, and the Edward Simon Lewis House, which serve as several of the present-day townhouses and give an evolutionary urban character to the development. Most apartment and townhouse units are oriented toward the water, increasing the insular, but peaceful, character of the community.

Many Southwest residents regard Harbour Square as one of the nicest and most luxurious of the complexes in Southwest. James Goode, in his survey of Washington’s “best addresses,” calls the complex “the most important” of the “apartment house projects designed in Southwest and one of the city’s most significant of the 1960s.”³⁵¹ Representing an opposing view, however, Wolf von Eckardt described the complex as “self-consciously overloaded and busy.”³⁵²

Chalk House West / Riverside, Edgewater, 1401-1415 Fourth St.

Chalk House West, designed by architects Lapidus, Harle & Liebman, was the winner of the third Southwest design competition. This competition included eighteen competitors.³⁵³ Fourth, O, and P streets and the waterfront bound the complex. The D.C. Transit Co. car barn and trolley yard formerly occupied the site.³⁵⁴ The complex contained 324 dwelling units, split between 280 elevator apartment units in two high-rise buildings, thirty-two maisonettes, and twelve townhouses.³⁵⁵ The developer was the D.C. Realty & Development Corp., a subsidiary of D.C. Transit, which was headed by Roy Chalk.³⁵⁶ Construction on the complex began in fiscal year 1963 and finished in 1966.³⁵⁷ The first tenants began moving in during September 1965.³⁵⁸ In 1969, S. Finley Thomas purchased the complex and renamed it Finley House.³⁵⁹ Today, it has been broken up into several sub-developments: Riverside Condominium Apartments (located at 1425 Fourth Street), Edgewater Condominium Apartments (located at 410 O Street), and 1401-

³⁵⁰ *Two on Two at the Octagon*, 10.

³⁵¹ Goode, 410.

³⁵² Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 304.

³⁵³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 10.

³⁵⁴ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 262.

³⁵⁵ SCC and SWNA, 15; D.C. RLA, “The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area.”

³⁵⁶ SCC and SWNA, 15.

³⁵⁷ D.C. RLA, 1963, 18.

³⁵⁸ “Chalk House West Gets First Tenants,” *Washington Post*, 11 September 1965, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁵⁹ “Chalk Complex Sold for More Than \$7 Million,” *Washington Post*, 20 December 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

1415 Fourth Street.³⁶⁰ Prior to its October 3, 1980 conversion to condominiums, Riverside had been used as rental housing.³⁶¹

The former Chalk House complex has a much less unified appearance than its nearby neighbors. The nine-story high-rise buildings of Riverside have white, rectangular, metal-railed balconies jutting off of half of the apartments. Light brown bricks cover the majority of the façade. The townhouses echo this pattern. The lobby floor is partially encased in glass, while another a concrete plaza covers the rest. Vegetation covers much of the interior complex grounds, which surround a community pool. The abundance of natural features on the property were carefully planned in order to offer “the privacy of a waterfront home with the conveniences of an apartment in the city.”³⁶² Parking is located underground. The townhouses, now incorporated into Edgewater, are fairly cold, constructed of dark brick. A greenway splits the complex, running along the former O Street. The overall feel of the community, nestled next to Fort McNair on the complex’s south and the waterfront on its west, is fairly quiet and secluded.

Town Square

Town Square, along with Capitol Park, provides the northern residential boundary to the Southwest urban renewal-era construction. The complex is bounded by the Southwest Expressway, Seventh, Eye, and Fourth streets, excluding the southeastern portion of that block, which is occupied by Southeastern University, Amidon Elementary School, and its associated playground. Charles S. Bresler and Burton J. Reiner, operating as Charles Burton Builders, Inc., were the developers.³⁶³ The architecture firm Cohen-Haft Associates designed the tower,³⁶⁴ Town Square Towers Apartments, which is located at 700 Seventh Street, on the former sites of Fays Alley and Lettie Street.³⁶⁵ Macomber and Peter, noted restoration architects, designed the townhouses,³⁶⁶ which are located on the former sites of Springman Court, Pig Alley, Burke Court, Burke Alley, Page Alley,³⁶⁷ Willett Alley, and Smithsons Court.³⁶⁸ The tower consists of 282 apartment units. Construction began in 1965 and finished in 1967. The Federal-style townhouses were built in phases, with the first cluster of approximately ninety two- and four-bedroom townhouses built at Sixth and Eye Streets, starting in 1963. The next cluster, begun in 1964, brought the total number of townhouses to 180. They opened in 1965.³⁶⁹ More such units were built later in this area. The overall complex also contains five low-rise apartment buildings.

³⁶⁰ Protopappas and Brown, 55-56.

³⁶¹ *Southwester*, November 1980.

³⁶² “New Apartment Living Related to Waterfront,” *Washington Post*, 24 October 1965, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁶³ SCC and SWNA, 15; “Bresler, Reiner Plan 700 Town Houses,” *Washington Post*, 2 October 1965, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁶⁴ “Town Square Towers—,” *Washington Post*, 30 September 1967, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁶⁵ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 234.

³⁶⁶ SCC and SWNA, 15.

³⁶⁷ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 234.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 237.

³⁶⁹ “Georgetown Flavor for Southwest,” *Washington Post*, 16 February 1963, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; “A View of Town Square,” *Washington Post*, 11 September 1965, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Although the high-rise and townhouses of Town Square share a common complex name and access to a community pool, they exist fairly separately. This is particularly true in the exterior materials and appearance of the structures, as well as their current management. The eight-story tower's most distinctive feature is its polygonal honeycomb white balconies that jut out from the brick building. The roofline also repeats this pattern as arches, creating cathedral ceilings in some of the penthouse units. Most parking is contained in an underground structure beneath the building. The Federal-style townhouses have predominantly light tan brick facades. These are some of the only newly constructed housing units in Southwest that do not display Modernist features. On the interior, when built, they incorporated all-electric Gold Medallion appliances.³⁷⁰ The units employ an alternating system of first- or second-floor entrances. The houses line main streets and also border individual interior gardens. Most parking for those units is in individual garages or surface parking located in small lots or along the street. Today the tower operates as condominiums, and the townhouses are organized into non-profit homeowners' associations, such as Townhouse Management One, Inc.

Waterside Towers

Waterside Towers was the last housing community to be completed in the new Southwest. It is located to the west of Town Center Plaza West, at 907 Sixth Street, on the area bounded by Eye and Sixth streets and Maine Avenue. This was the former site of Enoch Ambush Public School and the residential communities of Lettie Street, Pig Alley, and Ambush Alley.³⁷¹ Its 434 units are divided between three high-rise apartment buildings and three-story townhouses.³⁷² The architecture firm Chloethiel Woodard Smith and Associates designed the complex, which was developed by Charles S. Bresler and Burton J. Reiner. During part of the planning stage, the complex was known as Trilon Plaza, or Trilon Square.³⁷³ Construction began in fiscal year 1969 and was finished in the second half of 1970.³⁷⁴

The complex is arranged in a semi-hexagonal U-shape around a central, open courtyard. Underground parking is contained underneath the courtyard. The townhouses wall in the courtyard, creating an inwardly focused community. The apartment towers have tan brick facades with concrete trim. The units, which are operated as rental housing, have individual metal rectangular balconies. The building façade ripples in and out, accommodating space for the balconies, which align almost flush with the rest of the façade. Unusually for Southwest, the towers contain rental units on nine levels, with pilotis below.

Channel Square

Channel Square was the first moderate-income housing complex in the new Southwest. It lies to the south of River Park, at 325 P Street, and is bounded by Third, Fourth, O, and P

³⁷⁰ "More Gold Medallion Homes Are Open," *Washington Post*, 15 May 1965, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁷¹ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 245.

³⁷² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 23.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*; Design Research, 35.

³⁷⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 23.

streets. Facilities of the D.C. Transit Co. formerly occupied the site.³⁷⁵ Harry Weese and Associates designed the complex.³⁷⁶ Channel Square consists of 278 residential units – distributed between 203 high-rise residential units in a single high-rise apartment building and seventy-five garden apartments and townhouses – and approximately 5,000 square feet of commercial space. Prior to construction, the complex was also known as the Ralph Bush Houses.³⁷⁷ Construction began in fiscal year 1968 and ended in fiscal year 1969.³⁷⁸

The buildings of Channel Square have tan brick facades. The townhouse facades are distinguished by the semicircular arched openings on the brick faces of the units. The grounds are relatively spare, with a parking lot to the north and walkways between facing rows of townhouses. The complex also includes a play area.

More distinctive than the architecture of Channel Square, however, was the income group it targeted for its residents. As “middle-income housing designed under section 221 D3 of the Housing Act of 1949, which subsidized the developer’s interest rate and kept rents down,”³⁷⁹ the development served those residents who fell between the income restrictions of public housing and the level of income required to live in the other Southwest residential communities. Families of various sizes could be accommodated in the one- to four-bedroom apartment units³⁸⁰ – a contrast to the emphasis on efficiencies and other low occupancy units in many of the other apartment buildings in the area. Those eligible families that had been displaced by public action were given priority among the long list of initial potential residents.³⁸¹ Today, this tradition continues, with many residents benefiting from Section Eight housing subsidies.

St. James Mutual Homes

Like Channel Square, the 107 units of St. James Mutual Homes were also intended for moderate-income residents. The distinctive feature at St. James, however, was that the complex had been rehabilitated, unlike the fresh residential construction that dominated most new Southwest housing communities. Designed by architect Albert I. Cassell, the complex had formerly served as segregated public housing for the black community.³⁸² From the time of its rehabilitation, the eight-building apartment complex operated as a cooperative. As such, it was the country’s “first cooperative housing financed under the FHA 221 (d)(3) program for moderate-income families.”³⁸³ Existing tenants were given the first option on buying their units,³⁸⁴ and the Foundation for Cooperative Housing assisted with the conversion.³⁸⁵ The RLA

³⁷⁵ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 262.

³⁷⁶ Protopappas and Brown, 56.

³⁷⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 4.

³⁷⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 1; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, ii.

³⁷⁹ Protopappas and Brown, 56.

³⁸⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 23.

³⁸¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 7.

³⁸² *River Park and its Neighbors: 25 Years of Urban Renewal, 1963-1988* [Washington, D.C.: Reynolds Metal Co., 1988], 12.

³⁸³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 2.

³⁸⁴ “RLA Acts on Renewal Housing,” *Washington Post*, 7 November 1963, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

originally purchased the 1930s-era complex in 1959.³⁸⁶ The completed complex, located on the area between O, P, Second, and Third streets, at 210 O Street, opened in 1967.³⁸⁷ The buildings themselves are covered in dark brick, and landscaped courtyards surround them.

Community Facilities

Schools

Former Conditions and Buildings Spared

The old Southwest contained ten segregated public schools, including eight elementary schools and two junior high schools. The elementary schools were Ambush, Amidon, Bell, Anthony Bowen, S.J. Bowen, Fairbrother, Greenleaf, and Syphax. Not all of these were located within the urban renewal area. The junior high schools were Jefferson and Randall.³⁸⁸ The children of Southwest attended segregated senior high schools outside the quadrant. Black children attended Dunbar (academic), Armstrong (technical), or Cardozo (commercial), and white children attended Roosevelt (academic), McKinley (technical), or Eastern (commercial).³⁸⁹

Generally speaking, the area's elementary schools were old, "barn-like,"³⁹⁰ and had small, inadequate play spaces.³⁹¹ Enrollment in the elementary schools attended by black children was over capacity, while that in those schools attended by white children was under capacity.³⁹² Of all of the schools in the old Southwest, only two of the elementary schools – William Syphax Elementary School and Anthony Bowen Elementary School – survived urban renewal urban renewal. (As Syphax was located outside the urban renewal area, it is not discussed here in detail.) In addition, the play areas associated with the two junior high schools were deemed "moderately satisfactory."³⁹³

ANTHONY BOWEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Anthony Bowen Elementary School is located at 101 M Street, at the corner of M Street and Delaware Avenue. It was built on a 4.02-acre site in 1930, with an addition completed in 1931, and another added in 1976. During redevelopment, its twenty-four rooms had a capacity of 864 students. In October 1953, it was operating at 97 percent of capacity; by March 1956, following the displacement of many of Southwest's residents, it was down to 70 percent of

³⁸⁵ "Apartments Rehabilitated for Low-Income Families," *Washington Post*, 5 August 1957, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁸⁶ Paul A. Schuette, "Cooperative Given 90 Days to Finish Buying SW Project," *Washington Post*, 20 November 1964, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁸⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 4.

³⁸⁸ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Plate 13.

³⁸⁹ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 6.

³⁹⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 8.

³⁹¹ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 6.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁹³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 8.

capacity.³⁹⁴ Today, the three-story brick building with an area of 71,900 square feet has a capacity of 360 students, ranging from pre-kindergarten through sixth grade.³⁹⁵ It is the only existing Southwest elementary school located within the urban renewal area to survive redevelopment.

JEFFERSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Jefferson Junior High School is located at 801 Seventh Street, at the corner of Seventh Street and Maine Avenue. It is one of the two junior high schools in Southwest that survived urban renewal. Its property includes athletic fields, as well as the Georgian revival school building, which was built in 1940. This school was a replacement for the previous Jefferson Junior High School, which was built in 1872 at Sixth and D streets. The District's then municipal architect, Nathan Corwith Wyeth, designed the later building,³⁹⁶ which has a T-shaped plan and is constructed of brick, with a white wooden cupola at the top. During redevelopment, this building's twenty-five rooms could accommodate 603 students. In October 1953, it was operating at 62 percent of capacity, and in March 1956, it was up to 98 percent of capacity.³⁹⁷ Today, the building area of 109,000 square feet has a capacity of 820 students.³⁹⁸ Prior to urban renewal, and its associated construction and opening of a freestanding public library building in late 1965, one wing of the building served as the Southwest Branch Library.³⁹⁹ In the early 1960s, the school also led the way in adapting the "Amidon Plan" (see below) to junior high school teaching.

RANDALL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Randall Junior High School was located at 65 Eye Street, at First and Eye streets. It was the second of the two junior high schools in Southwest that survived urban renewal. It includes 150,000 square feet of space inside the building, located on two acres of land, next to the Randall Recreation Center.⁴⁰⁰ The two- to three-story brick building was constructed in 1902, and an addition was added in 1949. Its forty-nine rooms had a capacity of 1486. In October 1953, it was operating at 113 percent of capacity, but by March 1956 it was down to 49 percent of capacity.⁴⁰¹ Today, the school building has been adaptively reused as the home of the non-profit Millennium Arts Center, among other uses.

³⁹⁴ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Plate 13.

³⁹⁵ District of Columbia Public Schools, "D.C. Public Schools: Area D Building Profiles," *Facility Master Plan Update*, Fall 2003, 304, <http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps/OFM/masterplan/Building%20Profiles/Area%20D/Dtotal.pdf>, accessed 5 August 2004.

³⁹⁶ "Southwest Branch Library History," *District of Columbia Public Library Home Page*, <http://www.dclibrary.org/branches/sow/history.html>, accessed 21 July 2004.

³⁹⁷ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Plate 13.

³⁹⁸ District of Columbia Public Schools, 307.

³⁹⁹ "Southwest Branch Library History."

⁴⁰⁰ "Artistic Touch: SW School to Become New Arts Center," *Washington Business Journal*, 21 May 1999, <http://washington.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/1999/05/24/story6.html>, accessed 7 July 2004.

⁴⁰¹ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Plate 13.

Buildings of the New Southwest

The new Southwest had five public schools (four of which were in the urban renewal area) – including the two existing pairs of elementary and junior high schools, plus one new elementary school – as well as one private school. In addition, River Park housed a cooperative nursery school.⁴⁰² The new public elementary school was Amidon Elementary School, and the new private high school was the Hawthorne School. Today, although all or portions of all six of the school buildings in existence after urban renewal still survive today, only four still function as schools. Of those, one – the Hawthorne School – has changed function slightly, moving up the educational ladder from high school to university.

The story of Southwest's schools intersects significantly with issues of race relations in the city. As a new public elementary school was opened, district boundaries prevented many nearby public housing children from attending the underutilized facilities, even while their own school was overcrowded. Eventually, in 1966, the D.C. School Board consolidated the neighborhood's three elementary schools – Amidon, Bowen, and Syphax – in an attempt to equalize the level of education being offered to students. Rather than having all financial support go to the predominantly upper class Amidon School, the Board hoped that the quality at all three schools would increase. The upper class largely opposed this consolidation, however, and many responded by moving their children to private schools.

AMIDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Amidon Elementary School is located at 401 Eye Street, on the corner of Fourth and Eye streets. This was the former site of a church and the residential communities of Cunningham Alley and Smithsons Court.⁴⁰³ Amidon was the only new public school constructed in Southwest during urban renewal. Architects Lublin, McGaughy and Associates designed the building, for which ground was broken on August 4, 1959. Construction completed in the second half of 1960, and a dedication took place on May 9, 1961. Classes commenced prior to the dedication, on September 7, 1960.⁴⁰⁴

The 4.84-acre site includes the school building at the southern end of a rectangular tract, with a large recreational playground to the north. When completed, the building had capacity for approximately 800 students, ranging from kindergarten through sixth grade, and dispersed among twenty-six classrooms.⁴⁰⁵ Its form was of two perpendicular rectangular blocks. In 1975, a third rectangle was added to the northern side. Today, it has a building area of 70,800 square feet, with a capacity of 452 students, ranging from pre-kindergarten through sixth grade.⁴⁰⁶ The building itself is two stories in height, with a red brick façade, ceramic tile trim, and a flat roof. A large concrete pillar stands to the left of the front entryway. The addition introduces several concrete spandrels and columns in the brick façade.

⁴⁰² SCC and SWNA, 6-7.

⁴⁰³ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 237.

⁴⁰⁴ "Dedication: Margaret M. Amidon School," pamphlet, 9 May 1961, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ District of Columbia Public Schools, 304.

This building and site were a replacement for the former Amidon School, which was built in 1882 at Sixth and F streets. That building was closed on June 30, 1957. Both schools were named in honor of Margaret M. Amidon, a woman described in the new school's dedication program as "educator – leader – friend – pioneer."⁴⁰⁷

The most distinctive feature of the new Amidon School was not its architecture, but its educational program. The "Amidon Plan," under which the new school operated from the outset, and which later spread to other schools in Washington, D.C., implemented a "track system" and a curriculum of pre-planned lessons focused on teaching knowledge and skills earlier in a student's career. For example, kindergarten became less focused on playtime.⁴⁰⁸

Another unique aspect of the school was that, although it catered primarily to children who lived west of Delaware Avenue (as well as some public housing children), it originally operated as a magnet school that was open to select students outside its typical geographic district. The decision to open enrollment in this way – effectively welcoming any students in the district whose parents could transport them to the school – was in part a means to fill the school's initial excess capacity while many of Southwest's residential buildings were still being built. Although the 1965-1966 school year welcomed more public housing students to the school,⁴⁰⁹ the school's policy of integrating the children of all of Southwest's socioeconomic groups ended after the 1975-1976 school year.⁴¹⁰

HAWTHORNE SCHOOL/SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

The Hawthorne School was located at 501 Eye Street, at the corner of Sixth and Eye streets. It was one of the two new schools constructed during Southwest's urban renewal, and the only one of those that was a high school. In addition, it was the only private school located in the new Southwest. Architect Charles M. Goodman designed the structure, building off of and adding to the original Metropolitan Boys' Club Building on the site.⁴¹¹ The Boys' Club occupied the middle portion of Sixth Street, halfway between G and H streets, and Goodman's addition was added on to the south, right at the corner of H and Sixth streets.⁴¹² Construction began in fiscal year 1964,⁴¹³ and the school commenced use with the 1964-65 school year.⁴¹⁴ It closed in 1972 due to financial difficulties. In September 1972, the Southeastern University's Washington campus took over the site, which it continues to inhabit today.⁴¹⁵

⁴⁰⁷ "Dedication: Margaret M. Amidon School."

⁴⁰⁸ SCC and SWNA, 26.

⁴⁰⁹ "Amidon Will Admit More SW Children," *Washington Post*, 4 September 1965.

⁴¹⁰ Richard E. Prince, "SW School Project Ends in Failure," *Washington Post*, 30 July 1976.

⁴¹¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 18.

⁴¹² *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 237.

⁴¹³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 18.

⁴¹⁴ SCC and SWNA, 27.

⁴¹⁵ *Southeastern University Home Page*, <http://www.seu.edu/gen/president/history.htm>, accessed 7 July

The original Hawthorne School began in fall 1956 in Northwest Washington, D.C., as a private, coeducational high school for students in grades nine through twelve. The school's curriculum attempted to provide a more personalized education that involved students and was based upon their own understanding and experience level. The school's original founders were Alexander G. and Eleanor W. Orr.⁴¹⁶

The new Southwest building consists of the original structure, the exterior façade of which Goodman removed to apply sheathing of exposed concrete, and a 28,197 square foot addition. The two-story, glass and concrete-walled addition served as the school's common area, while the original structure housed classrooms, the gymnasium, and other core uses.⁴¹⁷ The campus-like feel was well suited to the alternative educational environment of Hawthorne School, as well as to the later adoption of the site by the Southeastern University community.

The Brutalist-style building consists of a thick flat concrete roof band slightly overhanging one or two horizontal bands of continuous glass windows – one for each floor. Thick vertical concrete columns support the building, with equally spaced thin concrete dividers breaking up the glass into smaller sections. The effect is of a near-constant concrete façade when viewed from an angle, but a more open façade when viewed head-on. The middle and bottom supporting concrete spandrels are recessed from the emphasis of the columns and top roof overhang.

Churches

Former Conditions and Buildings Spared

The old Southwest contained approximately twenty churches.⁴¹⁸ Of these, the RLA saved only two, and even those were salvaged only after successful protests by parish leadership and members of the congregations. Those churches include St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church and the original Friendship Baptist Church. Both congregations received new or altered facilities through urban renewal.

Buildings of the New Southwest

During redevelopment, the Southwest area was surveyed to determine which and how many churches would be needed, in addition to the two salvaged Catholic and Baptist churches. Initially, the Washington Federation of Churches recommended the development of four new churches, with one for each of the Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian congregations.⁴¹⁹ This section of the report documents the currently existing churches that have connections to the urban renewal era.

⁴¹⁶ SCC and SWNA, 27.

⁴¹⁷ "A Bulldozer Isn't Always Needed," *Washington Post*, 4 April 1964.

⁴¹⁸ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 6.

⁴¹⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 16.

As redevelopment pushed many of the old churches out of Southwest, and the new churches would cater to a new community of residents, the churches that remained formed the Parish Ministry of Southwest, a cooperative effort to attract the residents of the new Southwest to their facilities. Their efforts included sending a parish caller to greet new residents. In the end, however, although more than half of the new residents affiliated themselves with one of the area's churches, local churches estimated in the mid-1960s that as few as 5 percent of residents actually attended services.⁴²⁰ Today, this continues to be an issue, as church facility capacity exceeds demand, and parishes like St. Matthew's are looking to downsize to smaller structures.

ST. DOMINIC'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Dominic's Church is located at 630 E Street, at the corner of Sixth and E streets. The corner stone was laid on November 19, 1865, and construction finished in 1875.⁴²¹ Architect Patrick Keely designed it in the English Gothic style.⁴²² The church was originally slated for demolition so that the Southwest Freeway could traverse its location, but today the building's familiar 250-foot spire still rises above its freeway neighbor. Through the assistance of the Most Reverend Philip M. Hannan, a religious representative to the Federal City Council and a friend of several Congressmen, the main church building was saved.⁴²³

The freeway did, however, cost the parish its fifty-year-old parochial school building, its convent, and its rectory.⁴²⁴ Eventually, new construction replaced some of that lost space. On December 16, 1960, ground was broken for a new priory – a four-story, forty-one room residence and chapel. This was the former site of the St. Dominic's Alley residential community.⁴²⁵ The new priory was designed by architect Thomas H. Locraft and Associates.⁴²⁶ Construction was completed in February 1962.⁴²⁷ Today, the church – nestled incongruously between the high-speed expressway, the towering ten-story Nassif Building, and other corporate neighbors – continues to operate in Southwest by serving a much different community than before. Attendees at its services include Federal office workers, subway commuters, and residents of the new Southwest.⁴²⁸

FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

The original Friendship Baptist Church is located at 734 First Street at the corner of First and H streets. The Virginia Avenue Baptist Church congregation, a group founded in 1875, funded the building of the structure in 1886-1887. The church's early congregation consisted

⁴²⁰ SCC and SWNA, 28.

⁴²¹ Mary E. Moran, *St. Dominic's Parish, Washington, D.C.: A Sesquicentennial Celebration, 1852-2002* (Chevy Chase, MD: Posterity Press, 2002), 13, 16.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴²⁵ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 234.

⁴²⁶ D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area."

⁴²⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 13.

⁴²⁸ Moran, 47-49.

primarily of former African American slaves. The Italianate Gothic brick building, designed by an unknown architect, experienced two additions: a plain brick rear in 1930, and a gabled, brick-faced front in 1952. The African American architect Howard D. Woodson designed the second addition.⁴²⁹ Although originally slated for demolition, the church's pastor, Reverend Benjamin H. Whiting, argued that the church was a bedrock neighborhood institution and succeeded in 1952 in removing the building from the urban renewal area. Nine years after a new church was built for the church's congregation in 1965, they sold the old building to Miracle Temple of Faith Baptist Church. In 1982, it was sold to the Redeemed Temple of Jesus Christ. In 2001, due to deterioration, the building closed.⁴³⁰ Today, a new developer, Steve Tanner, is in the process of converting the site to condominium units, while maintaining much of the old, white, dilapidated structure.⁴³¹

The new Friendship Baptist Church is located at 900 Delaware Avenue at the corner of Delaware Avenue and Eye Street. With a seating capacity of 1,500, it is the largest church in the Southwest urban renewal area. Vaughn, Ferguson and Woodson designed the building. Construction began in 1964,⁴³² and the church was dedicated in September 1965. Some of the church's modern features include its aluminum cross and front tower crown.⁴³³

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Christ United Methodist Church is located at 900 Fourth Street, at the corner of Fourth and Eye streets. A firehouse formerly occupied the site.⁴³⁴ Architect A. Hensel Fink of Philadelphia, PA, designed it. Construction began on May 13 1962⁴³⁵ – the first groundbreaking for a church in the new Southwest – and completed in 1963. It was dedicated on Palm Sunday 1963.⁴³⁶ The church formed in 1961 due to the merger of Gorsuch Methodist Church, formerly located at Fourth and L streets in Southwest, and Lewis Memorial Church, formerly of Northwest Washington, D.C.⁴³⁷

The building itself, along with a minister's house next door, sits on a three-quarter acre lot. The sanctuary, which has a V-shaped roofline and doorway overhang, with a large glass front façade, can seat 300 individuals. The rear chancel wall is decorated with a glass tile mosaic designed by Odell Prather and executed by New York's Venetian art Mosaics Studio using Italian materials. The original marble façade was replaced with limestone in 1983, and other renovations took place in the interior in 1994 and 1997.

⁴²⁹ Patricia Sullivan, "Condominiums Proposed Around Historic Church," *Washington Post*, 3 June 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A9461-2004Jun2.html>, accessed 5 August 2004.

⁴³⁰ Historic Preservation Review Board, "Friendship Baptist Church," 27 May 2004, D.C. HPO.

⁴³¹ Sullivan.

⁴³² "Friendship Baptist Structure Started," *Washington Post*, 6 June 1964.

⁴³³ Wolf von Eckardt, "Acrobatic Churches Lack Meaning," *Washington Post*, 3 June 1966.

⁴³⁴ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 247.

⁴³⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 12; *Christ United Methodist Church Home Page*, http://www.curncdc.org/about_christ, accessed 8 July 2004.

⁴³⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 9, 15.

⁴³⁷ *Christ United Methodist Church Home Page*.

BETHEL PENTECOSTAL TABERNACLE

Bethel Pentecostal Tabernacle is located at 60 Eye Street, at the corner of Half and Eye streets. Architect Eimer Cappelman designed the building.⁴³⁸ Construction began in spring 1962⁴³⁹ and was completed in 1963.⁴⁴⁰ It was dedicated on March 31, 1963.

The Assembly of God congregation dates back to 1921. Its 230 Twelfth Street building in the old Southwest, to which it moved in 1948, was demolished in 1960. Its replacement urban renewal brick building can seat 300 in its sanctuary. At one point, its space was also leased out to the Southwest Jewish community, in search of a place to worship.⁴⁴¹ The building itself consists of a simple brick structure with a black roof and a center side entryway looking out on Eye Street. A rectangular tower rises in the middle of the northern side, with a simple cross on top. Elongated windows punctuate the walls.

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church is located at 222 M Street, at the corner of M Street and Delaware Avenue. Architect Milton Prassas designed the building. Construction began in spring 1962⁴⁴² and finished in 1964.⁴⁴³

The church can seat 400 people, and its fellowship hall can accommodate 200-300. The entrance of this Modernist church faces west, with a steep triangular roof overhanging a glass façade. The shape supposedly symbolizes "folded hands reaching into the sky."⁴⁴⁴ White, triangular roof arches line the sides, and arches of more obtuse angles provide a covered overhang to the entrance walkway. A tall spire rises in the back.

Currently, the fellowship hall also serves as the location for community meetings, such as those of the Southwest Neighborhood Association. The overall building is currently in severe disrepair, and the congregation is considering replacing it.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Westminster Presbyterian Church is located at 400 Eye Street, at the corner of Fourth and Eye streets. The church was formerly located in the old Southwest at 437 Seventh Street.⁴⁴⁵ The

⁴³⁸ D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area."

⁴³⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 12.

⁴⁴⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 9.

⁴⁴¹ SCC and SWNA, 29.

⁴⁴² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 12.

⁴⁴³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 15.

⁴⁴⁴ John B. Willmann, "A Walk in Southwest Will Refresh Tired Eyes," *Washington Post*, 16 February 1963, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁴⁴⁵ SCC and SWNA, 29.

architect of the new building was Harry E. Wagoner, of Philadelphia, PA.⁴⁴⁶ Construction began in 1964⁴⁴⁷ and finished in 1965. It was dedicated in October 1965.

The Southwest congregation itself dates back to 1853.⁴⁴⁸ The group has typically been progressive, opposing Vietnam and supporting women's rights and the inclusion of gays and lesbians. Its new building's Modernist physical design – one of two such Modernist designs in the new Southwest – is similarly progressive.

The building has rusticated concrete walls, with a precast concrete cross in front of a concrete screen entrance. The originally exposed concrete aggregate interior floor has been replaced by ceramic tile in a Hopi Indian pattern. In addition to hosting religious services, the building is also the site of "Jazz Night in Southwest," held every Friday.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. Augustine's Episcopal Church is located at 600 M Street, at the corner of Sixth and M streets. Construction began in 1964 and completed in fiscal 1966. Prior to the completion of the building, the congregation met at Hogate's Restaurant, on the Waterfront. St. Augustine's is unique in that it was not one of the church buildings originally planned for the Southwest, but its development was the result of a poll by James L. Hudson, the parish visitor, of the new Southwest's residents' religious affiliations.⁴⁴⁹ Once their new building was completed, the congregation also shared the space with the Jewish community of Temple Micah, which lacked space of its own.⁴⁵⁰

The building itself is a simple, small box with a modestly peaked concrete roof. It has a brick lower façade, topped by a row of continuous windowpanes stretching from side to side. The panes increase in height as they approach the center, meeting flush against the peaked roof. Tall, but modest wooden doors are centered at the front entrance. A tall, thin, metal cross rises from the building's roof. The grounds surrounding the church are simple as well, covered with trees and grass. Given the church's proximity to the waterfront, the building is potentially at risk of alteration or removal during upcoming waterfront redevelopment.

RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

Riverside Baptist Church is located at 680 Eye Street, at the corner of Seventh and Eye streets. Ward and Hall, of Springfield, VA, designed the building. Construction began in April 1967 and finished in February 1968.

⁴⁴⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 19.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ *Westminster Presbyterian Church Home Page*, <http://www.westminsterdc.org/location.htm>, accessed 8 July 2004.

⁴⁴⁹ "Religious Poll Leads to New Church in SW," *Washington Post*, 7 March 1964, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁴⁵⁰ "Sharing at St. Augustine's Leads to More Ecumenity," *Washington Post*, 30 January 1971, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

The congregation, established in 1856 as the Fifth Baptist Church, is one of Washington, D.C.'s three oldest Baptist churches. It was originally located at 609 E Street in the old Southwest. Its former congregation was largely white, but today it is a mixture of black and white members, many of whom live in Virginia and Maryland.

The church building has a steep gabled roof, with stained glass windows at the front and back facades' peaked ends. These allow light to enter the tall interior space. The front and back A-frame gables are virtually identical to those of St. Matthew's, although the building lacks the side arches incorporated at its more Modernist neighbor. The façade is faced in stone. The front doorway is recessed into a cove of steps, walls, and ceiling.

Library

Former Conditions

The original Southwest Branch Library was part of Jefferson Junior High School. Washington, D.C., architect Nathan Corwith Wyeth designed the Georgian Revival Thomas Jefferson Junior High School and Library, the library of which was dedicated on January 3, 1941. The two-story, brick library wing served the community until urban renewal presented an opportunity for the construction of a new facility.

Building of the New Southwest

In 1955, the library's Board of Trustees requested that the RLA incorporate a new library into their redevelopment plans. In 1962, a site was selected at 900 Wesley Place, at the corner of Third and K streets.⁴⁵¹ S.J. Bowen Public School formerly occupied the site.⁴⁵² This location was on the same large block of property as the Town Center commercial shops, churches, and parks. The architectural firm Clas & Riggs, of the D.C. metropolitan area, designed the building that was eventually erected there. Construction began in 1964⁴⁵³ and finished in 1965.⁴⁵⁴ It was dedicated on October 22, 1965.⁴⁵⁵

The two-story Southwest Public Library building was constructed of reinforced concrete, layered with a red brick façade on top. It has vertical strip windows, as opposed to the originally proposed horizontal ones. In total, the library offers 20,000 square feet of space in its air-conditioned interior. The adult collection of books is housed on the first floor, while children's books were originally found on the second level. The basement includes a community meeting room.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵¹ "Southwest Branch Library History."

⁴⁵² *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 247.

⁴⁵³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1964, 11.

⁴⁵⁴ SCC and SWNA, 29.

⁴⁵⁵ "Southwest Branch Library History."

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

Parks and Recreation Areas

Former Conditions

The old Southwest was lacking in adequate parks and recreational areas. There were two major recreational areas – located on the grounds of the two junior high schools – which were suited to organized recreation by various age groups. In addition, Hoover Playground existed at Delaware Avenue and Canal Street, along the urban renewal area’s southeast boundary.

None of the elementary schools had sufficient playgrounds. In addition, Southwest contained no neighborhood parks. As described in various redevelopment plans, “eight acres of potential park land are located along the old canal and are presently used for temporary public war housing structures.”⁴⁵⁷ Although not immediately accessible, East Potomac Park was located across the Washington Channel from Southwest.

Sites of the New Southwest

Urban renewal sought to enhance the existing recreational space in Southwest, as well as add to it. The most significant additions were the Randall Recreation Center, Town Center Parks, and Waterside Parks. In addition, Project Area C-1 contains Lansburgh Neighborhood Park, a facility with tennis courts and open green space.

RANDALL RECREATION CENTER

The Randall Recreation Center lies adjacent to Randall Junior High School, at South Capitol Street and Eye Street, on the western border of the urban renewal area. The center includes the area’s first public pool, as well as tennis courts, softball fields, volleyball and basketball courts, among other facilities.⁴⁵⁸ D.C. Parks and Recreation organizes activities and sports at the facilities. The center may be impacted by potential plans for redeveloping the South Capitol Street area.

TOWN CENTER PARKS

In keeping with the community center nature of Town Center, the area includes three Town Center Parks located behind Waterside Mall. They are situated at the corner of Sixth and Eye streets; at Eye and Fourth streets, between Christ Methodist Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church; and at the corner of Eye and Third streets, next to the Southwest Public Library. The westernmost park occupies the former site of the Cow Alley residential community.⁴⁵⁹ Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd, of Philadelphia, PA, designed the parks.

⁴⁵⁷ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 6.

⁴⁵⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 7.

⁴⁵⁹ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 246.

They were completed in 1972. The parks contain benches, trees, walkways, and a large pond.⁴⁶⁰ The National Park Service maintains the parks.

WATERSIDE PARKS

The Modernist landscape architecture firm of Sasaki, Dawson & DeMay, of Cambridge, MA, designed the five Waterside Parks.⁴⁶¹ The parks were largely constructed between 1968 and 1972. One of these parks is located at the southern edge of the waterfront promenade, just north of Fort McNair. It contains the relocated Titanic Memorial, sculpted by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. Other parks, such as those at the intersection of Ninth Street and another outside Harbour Square, punctuate the waterside development. Concrete is a dominant feature of these plazas. The National Parks Service maintains the grounds. The parks are connected by the bulkhead walkway, or promenade, which was completed in 1972.⁴⁶²

Entertainment/Cultural Centers

Former Conditions

The old Southwest was not only economically impoverished, but it was culturally lacking as well. Despite its close proximity to the monuments and museums of the Washington Mall, the area itself was deficient in major cultural centers of its own that would entertain residents and draw in visitors. Entertainment venues prior to urban renewal mainly consisted of nightclubs.

Building of the New Southwest

While the main cultural center of the redeveloped Southwest was intended to be located at L'Enfant Plaza, along the L'Enfant Promenade, that vision never materialized. Instead, the major cultural facility that resulted was less a function of proactive planning than of an unprovoked expression of interest by a local theater troupe, the Washington Drama Society, to move to the Southwest. In response to this request, a theater was built much closer to the center of the neighborhood than one at L'Enfant Plaza would have been. Located at 1101 Sixth Street, just to the west of the Town Center, on the corner of Sixth Street and Maine Avenue, the original Arena Stage was later supplemented with the addition of the Kreeger Theater.

Architect Harry Weese designed both parts of the building. This was Weese's first theater project.⁴⁶³ Both pieces of the building are constructed of poured concrete frames and "gray-buff brick," with gray sheet-metal roofs.⁴⁶⁴

With an eye toward updating the existing structure, as well as coordinating with the current development plans in Southwest and its Waterfront, the Arena Stage (as the entire

⁴⁶⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, 25.

⁴⁶¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 4.

⁴⁶² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 18.

⁴⁶³ Design Research, 37.

⁴⁶⁴ Scott and Lee, 244-245.

complex is called) is about to embark on a building expansion and modernization. According to current plans by Bing Thom Architects, Arena Stage will supplement its two existing main stages with a third – a 200-seat black box theater called the Cradle. In addition, the Kreeger Theater will be technologically updated, and the overall facilities will be supplement by communal technology, workspace, housing, and gathering space for the artists.⁴⁶⁵

ARENA STAGE

The Washington Drama Society, or Arena Stage, had formerly operated out of a former brewery. When the theater troupe decided to move to a permanent home in Southwest, the Arena Stage was designed specifically for them. Construction on the building completed in 1961, and Arena Stage opened for its first season at the site on October 31, 1961.⁴⁶⁶

Referred to by the RLA as “the first legitimate theatre built in Washington since 1895,”⁴⁶⁷ Arena Stage is a true theater-in-the-round – “the first new building designed and built for theater-in-the-round in the U.S.”⁴⁶⁸ Its polygonal-shaped Fichandler Stage has capacity for 750,⁴⁶⁹ with seating arranged in four tiers around the stage. An administrative wing connects the stage to the main building through a glass bay. In recognition of the building’s design, the Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded the Arena Stage an Honor Award for Design Excellence.⁴⁷⁰

KREEGER THEATER

In August 1968, construction began on Weese’s design for the Kreeger Theater addition to Arena Stage.⁴⁷¹ Construction completed in 1970, the addition was dedicated on Nov 28, 1970, and it opened for use in 1971.⁴⁷² The theater company pursued the addition in order to address its growing needs for rehearsal, construction, administration, and dressing space. Moreover, the new space would offer a more intimate setting for children’s and experimental performances.⁴⁷³

Weese located the addition at the end of the administrative wing. The structure is three-story fan-shaped theater with a seating capacity of 500.⁴⁷⁴ The materials were chosen to match those of the existing Arena Stage, with the aim of unifying the building’s two main portions.

⁴⁶⁵ “Why Bring Arena to the Next Stage?” *Arena Stage Home Page*, <http://www.arenastage.org/thenextstage/>, accessed 8 July 2004.

⁴⁶⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 12.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁶⁸ SCC and SWNA, 17.

⁴⁶⁹ Protopappas and Brown, 52.

⁴⁷⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1964, 3.

⁴⁷¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 5.

⁴⁷² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 23.

⁴⁷³ Scott and Lee, 245.

⁴⁷⁴ Protopappas and Brown, 52.

Other Community Facilities

Former Conditions

In addition to the above sites and structures, the old Southwest contained a variety of other community facilities. These included two fire stations, one police station,⁴⁷⁵ a health center,⁴⁷⁶ two boys' clubs, and three community houses.⁴⁷⁷ Of these, only the Southwest Health Center was saved.

Buildings of the New Southwest

The police and fire stations were old and already scheduled for replacement. Urban renewal incorporated these replacements into its master plans, resulting in the construction of new fire stations for Engine Company No. 13 at 450 Sixth Street (at the corner of Sixth and E streets) and Engine Company No. 7 at 1101 Half Street (at the corner of Half and M streets). The Sixth Street station opened in fiscal year 1961, along with the Fourth Precinct Police Station, located next door at 415 Fourth Street.⁴⁷⁸ The Half Street fire station opened in fiscal year 1962, along with an associated repair shop.⁴⁷⁹ A facility at 550 Maine Avenue for police and fire boats 1 and 2 was also built as part of the waterfront development. All of these facilities are still in operation.

Other structures remained, but were put into different use. For example, the Boys' Club building was converted into the Hawthorne School, and the Barney Neighborhood House was incorporated into Harbour Square as a townhouse. The Southwest Health Center, located at 850 Delaware Avenue, also survived urban renewal and still functions today as the office of Unity Health Care.

Additional new buildings were added as well. For example, a motor vehicle testing station at Half and L streets was completed in 1961.⁴⁸⁰ In addition, the Southwest Bus Terminal was built at Ninth and D streets. The Southwest's function as an employment area necessitated construction of such a transportation center. Its financial sponsors were the RLA, D.C. Department of Highways and Traffic, U.S. Department of Transportation, and L'Enfant Plaza Corporations. The structure, with three bays with shelters, began operations in 1970.⁴⁸¹ It has since been replaced by the Aerospace Center.

⁴⁷⁵ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 6.

⁴⁷⁶ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 12.

⁴⁷⁷ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 6.

⁴⁷⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 18.

⁴⁷⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 14.

⁴⁸⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 18.

⁴⁸¹ Design Research, 38.

Commercial Buildings and Sites

Former Conditions and Buildings Saved

The original total commercial land area in the old Southwest was distributed as follows:

	Original 427-acre urban renewal area ⁴⁸²	Later 600-acre urban renewal area ⁴⁸³
First Commercial	21	29
Second Commercial	41	70
Total	61 acres	99 acres

Within that land area, commercial shops geared toward local residents were concentrated on Fourth and Seventh streets, while the Waterfront's commercial establishments catered to the broader District population,⁴⁸⁴ incorporating a lumberyard and other commercial buildings. Beyond these clusters, most blocks within the neighborhood were characterized by the type of dense urbanism – with corner grocery stores catering to local clientele – that typified many older American urban communities of the day.⁴⁸⁵

Only a few commercial buildings were saved from demolition. These included the District Grocery Stores (no longer in existence), the Miller-Dudley Building (located just west of South Capitol Street), a refrigeration plant west of Tenth Street (no longer in existence), and the Fish Market.

Early Proposals

While the Peets Plan largely would have kept many of Southwest's existing first commercial establishments, it proposed concentrating industrial, or second commercial, facilities along the waterfront. In addition, it advocated placing additional second commercial north of F Street, as well as north of G Street on the eastern side of Delaware Avenue.⁴⁸⁶ In total, it would roughly maintain the existing amount of first commercial acreage in the 427-acre urban renewal area at nineteen acres and increase second commercial up to 53.1 acres.⁴⁸⁷

On a completely different line of thinking, the Justement-Smith Plan proposed acquisition of most of the existing commercial areas,⁴⁸⁸ including the commercial activities along much of the waterfront, while concentrating future uses in major commercial centers, such as one north of the freeway, between Ninth and Seventh streets, and another south of Eye Street, between

⁴⁸² Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 22.

⁴⁸³ U.S. NCPC. *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 9.

⁴⁸⁴ Wrigley, 190.

⁴⁸⁵ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 4.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

Delaware Avenue and South Capitol Street⁴⁸⁹ In addition, the plan proposed to maintain “corner grocery” type stores and public buildings along residential streets to provide “welcome breaks in the design and scale of residential buildings.”⁴⁹⁰ The plan also advocated use of the area north of the Expressway (even north of G) and west of South Capitol Street for second commercial usage. In total, it increased first commercial acreage in the 427-acre urban renewal area up to 24 acres, and second commercial up to 36 acres.⁴⁹¹

The Bartholomew Compromise Plan called for a higher caliber of commercial stores in the new Southwest, with acreage in line with the recommendations of the Justement-Smith Plan. In terms of the location of that acreage, it recommended, “first commercial uses should be continued generally along Fourth Street from F to L streets, part of Seventh Street, and along Maine Avenue to M Street”⁴⁹² It also advocated locating second commercial “in the area between the expressway and the railroad, in the area west of Tenth Street and in certain locations along South Capitol Street.” This location and space could house existing establishments as well as significant new additions.⁴⁹³

Primary Buildings/Sites of the New Southwest

Consistent with the Justement-Smith Plan, and the Zeckendorf Plan that followed it, most of the first commercial activity in the new Southwest was concentrated in a major commercial center – what would become Town Center. Inconsistent with the Justement-Smith Plan, however, virtually all other “corner store” outlets were eliminated from the plan. The net effect, then, is of single-use residential areas, arranged around a commercial core.

In addition to the Town Center, the Zeckendorf Plan named two other primary commercial areas for the new Southwest: The Tenth Street Mall/L’Enfant Plaza and the waterfront. There is generally wide agreement that none of these three elements met the aspirations of their designers or the needs of their users. Thus, all three are the subject of current redevelopment proposals and efforts.

L’Enfant Promenade/Tenth Street Mall and L’Enfant Plaza

L’Enfant Promenade and L’Enfant Plaza were cornerstones of the Zeckendorf Plan. The Justement-Smith Plan initiated the idea of the Tenth Street Mall as a grand parkway entrance connecting the Southwest with the rest of Washington, D.C. In their plan, the parkway was lined with high-end apartment buildings. In the Zeckendorf Plan, however, the mall combined with a grand plaza to serve as a major cultural center for the Southwest. During planning stages, this cultural core was even compared to Paris’ Champs Elysees and Venice’s Piazza San Marco.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁸⁹ Wrigley, 196.

⁴⁹⁰ Quoted in U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 316.

⁴⁹¹ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 26.

⁴⁹² U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 18.

⁴⁹³ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 19.

⁴⁹⁴ *Washington Post*, 17 Feb 1954, quoted in Design Research, 35.

The lofty goals for the site were widely discussed. The RLA's 1954 annual report listed several elements of the proposed plaza, including "theater, opera, symphony and convention facilities and a 900 foot pedestrian way with an ice skating rink."⁴⁹⁵ Its 1958 report also mentioned a planetarium, which would include the world's largest sundial.⁴⁹⁶ In its urban renewal plan for Project Area C, the NCPC wrote in reference to the planned complex:

A cultural complex of theatres, restaurants, and the like will allow [the tourist] to savor the best of America's cultural flavor and entertainment talent. Such a center will also provide a place for other nations to display their cultural wares. National learned and scientific societies may find the Plaza a convenient place to locate. In short, the Plaza is envisioned as a cultural center for Washington, the Nation, and perhaps even the World.⁴⁹⁷

Beyond cultural enrichment alone, this new complex would also perform several other key functions. It would link the Southwest to Washington, D.C., obliterating its island status through the strategic bridging of the promenade over the old Pennsylvania Railroad tracks and the new Southwest Expressway. In addition, it would link with the existing monuments and museums of the Mall, tapping into the tourist potential there and leading visitors into Southwest. Finally, it would offer significant commercial space, in the form of retail shopping and office buildings, which would keep the area busy during the day, while cultural uses dominated at night.

Several issues delayed progress on the promenade and plaza. The principle hurdles were a disagreement over the location of the grand promenade and a battle with the Smithsonian over the location of its proposed Air and Space Museum.

The Smithsonian had long been planning to build a museum to house its airplane collection, and it intended to locate it along the Washington Mall, in the area bounded by Twelfth, Ninth, and C streets, and Independence Avenue.⁴⁹⁸ When Webb & Knapp proposed redevelopment plans for Southwest, the Smithsonian even contacted Zeckendorf in February 1954 to suggest that the museum serve as one of the axial portal sites for the planned promenade.⁴⁹⁹ The Smithsonian plan was virtually approved by the NCPC in September 1954 until John Remon, Chairman of the RLA, held up the process. Remon opposed the location, as it would effectively block the promenade's entrance to the Southwest.⁵⁰⁰ Thus, their plans were put on hold and a battle ensued.

⁴⁹⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1954, 19.

⁴⁹⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 10.

⁴⁹⁷ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 16-17.

⁴⁹⁸ "Smithsonian's Plane Plan Gets Another Setback," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 22 September 1954.

⁴⁹⁹ Robert C. Albrook, "Fabulous Southwest Planner Has a Coaxial Mind," *Washington Post*, [November 1954].

⁵⁰⁰ "Smithsonian's Plane Plan Gets Another Setback."

When Webb & Knapp signed its MOU for Project Area C with the RLA in 1954, it stipulated two prerequisites to its participation. The first of these concerned the firm's responsibility for studies related to land use. The second was the provision that there would be agreement to a Tenth Street esplanade.

In February 1955, however, the NCPC gave tentative approval to a report that advocated locating the promenade at Ninth Street. Under this plan, Tenth Street would feed into the new Southwest Expressway from a proposed new bridge over the Potomac; the railroad tracks would be moved and lowered to permit an overpass by the promenade at Ninth Street; and Twelfth Street would serve as a local road serving the existing produce market, rather than as a feeder to the Expressway, as proposed by Zeckendorf. Advocates of this plan noted this proposals many advantages, including its removal of the railroad tracks as a barrier between the neighborhood and the central business district; its enabling of the extension of Maryland Avenue to Twelfth Street, to the advantage of local traffic; its protection of the produce market at its current site; and its facilitation of the fulfillment of the Smithsonian's plan to build its proposed museum along Independence Avenue between Ninth and Twelfth streets.⁵⁰¹

Zeckendorf, with the support of the RLA, opposed this new plan. He claimed that his planners had studied all possible overpass routes between Fifth and Twelfth streets and had deemed Tenth Street "the only practical, economical way of doing the job." The two parties opposed the plan because they believed that moving the railroad would be too expensive,⁵⁰² that the size of the plaza would have to be reduced by 50 percent, and that the space for the flanking government office buildings would be reduced by one third.⁵⁰³

The two groups eventually reached agreement to move forward with the original Tenth Street promenade location, as well as to abandon the proposed location of the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum – moving it to its current site on the National Mall, between Fourth and Seventh streets, and requiring the design of a whole new building.⁵⁰⁴ With this obstacle removed, two other significant issues arose which did not delay – but, rather, hindered the effective execution of – the plan.

One hindrance came from the Navy Department, when it decided that, instead of building two buildings on either side of Tenth Street and then connecting them underground as originally planned, it would build one building straddling the new promenade.⁵⁰⁵ To this day, the building blocks the intended view of the now obstructed Smithsonian Castle.

The second hindrance was the decision not to locate the National Cultural Center (later the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts) at L'Enfant Plaza, but to settle elsewhere.

⁵⁰¹ Robert C. Albrook, "By Shifting Zeckendorf Site NCPC Group Maps Mall Plan Change," *Washington Post*, 4 February 1955.

⁵⁰² Albrook, "NCPC Has New Road Plan for Southwest."

⁵⁰³ "Mall Solution Seen by Aide of Zeckendorf," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 16 February 1955.

⁵⁰⁴ Robert J. Orr, "Air & Space in the Southwest: The Debate over a Tenth Street Mall," *Smithsonian Preservation Quarterly* (Winter 1995), <http://www.si.edu/oahp/spq/spq95w6.htm>, accessed 12 July 2004.

⁵⁰⁵ Greer, 15.

A national theater, or other major cultural center, had been in the discussion stage for decades before the District Auditorium Commission began making tangible progress in late 1955. During that year, T.W. Wilson submitted a report to John R. Searles, laying out a comprehensive case in favor of locating a “mass communications center” in Southwest. The report defined “mass communications” as “the equipment, the techniques and the arts of presentation for purposes of enlightenment, understanding, and entertainment.”⁵⁰⁶ A potential site of this sort in Southwest was envisioned to include a grand hall accommodating up to 4,000 people, a theater accommodating up to 2,000 people, a concert hall, a chamber music hall, an exhibit area, meeting rooms to accommodate groups of from 40 to 1,000 people, television studios, radio studios, film studios, reception areas, a communications library, and administrative offices.⁵⁰⁷ The report concluded that the Southwest site was “admirably suited as a location,” given the opportunities for impressive approaches, transportation and parking, proximity to Capitol Hill (especially given the Congressmen and Senators who might appear on talk radio shows), and the planned nearby office buildings.⁵⁰⁸

During summer 1956, a Southwest location – east of Tenth Street, between D and E streets – was one of eight potential sites that the commission considered. At that same time, Southwest was also being considered as the site for a new Washington Nationals baseball stadium.⁵⁰⁹ By late 1956, the Auditorium Commission seemed to favor a Foggy Bottom site, although numerous groups opposed this location, in part due to changes it would require to the Inner Loop Beltway and other planned development, as well as due to the losses to the Southwest Urban Renewal Area.⁵¹⁰

A January 31, 1957, report from the Commission ultimately recommended three possible sites, one in Foggy Bottom and two in Southwest – on the site bounded by Sixth, Tenth, D, and E streets and the Southwest Freeway, and the site bounded by Ninth, Twelfth, and D streets and the Southwest Freeway. While the RLA and others continued to oppose the Foggy Bottom site, Leon Chatelain, Jr., President of the American Institute of Architects, said of it, “the area happens to be the only remaining beautiful site along the Potomac River. This location automatically will give the proposed cultural center the proper and most attractive setting.”⁵¹¹ On February 15, 1957, the District Auditorium Commission’s Executive Committee voted unanimously in favor of the Foggy Bottom site. Although, on August 8, 1957, the House of Representatives defeated a bill to locate the Center at that particular site, others renewed the charge, selecting the alternate Foggy Bottom site on which the Kennedy Center was eventually

⁵⁰⁶ T.W. Wilson, *Preliminary Report: A Proposed New Land Use for the Plaza in the Southwest Washington Redevelopment Area*; Submitted to: John R. Searles, Jr. ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p. [Received 26 October 1955]), 9.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 16, 20.

⁵⁰⁹ In 1956, the team was renamed the Senators.

⁵¹⁰ Roger Meersman, “History of the Kennedy Center,” *John F. Kennedy Library and Museum Home Page*, http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/arts_meersman.html, accessed 12 July 2004.

⁵¹¹ *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 8 February 1957, quoted in Meersman.

built. As for Southwest, it never did find a substitute to fulfill L'Enfant Plaza's intended cultural role.⁵¹²

These difficulties aside, and after the 1965 transfer of redevelopment rights to the L'Enfant Plaza Center Corporation,⁵¹³ L'Enfant Promenade and L'Enfant Plaza were eventually planned by I.M. Pei & Partners as a merged design, with the mall running along the western side of the plaza. Portions of the overall complex were completed between 1960 and 1973.⁵¹⁴

L'ENFANT PROMENADE/TENTH STREET MALL

The L'Enfant Promenade turned a formerly unimportant and undistinguished Southwest street into a 200-foot wide divided roadway that provided a major entryway to the quadrant. Pei's plan was designed by the engineering, architectural, planning, and environmental consulting firm David Volkert & Associates. Construction began in fiscal year 1965.⁵¹⁵ In 1969, the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade recognized the Mall with an award for excellence in architecture,⁵¹⁶ noting its superior design and construction.⁵¹⁷

Although design sketches of the promenade showed a tree-lined roadway that terminated at the waterfront, the actual mall today is dominated by concrete, with inconspicuous trees along the sides, and ends at a concrete overlook. Specially designed light poles, over 22 feet high and topped with four glass globes, punctuate the roadway.⁵¹⁸ There is one lane of traffic – moving in opposite directions – on either side of a concrete island in the middle of the promenade. Parallel-parked cars line the curbs of the roadways, with entrances to underground parking garages lying off to the sides.

BANNEKER OVERLOOK

Although the promenade was intended to terminate at the Waterfront, engineering difficulties made realization of that plan infeasible. Thus, after the promenade overpasses the Southwest Expressway, it ends with an automobile ramp that descends to the lower roadways of Southwest, as well as with the pedestrian park now known as Benjamin Banneker Overlook Park. The park is elliptical, with a fountain in the middle and trees and benches around the outside.⁵¹⁹ Designed by landscape architect, Daniel Urban Kiley, it is raised 40 feet above Maine Avenue below.⁵²⁰ Originally it was to house parking facilities underneath, in part to service the proposed national aquarium to be located across the Potomac. However, no investor was willing

⁵¹² Meersman.

⁵¹³ "From Module to Mall," *Progressive Architecture* (November 1968): 98.

⁵¹⁴ Scott & Lee, 236.

⁵¹⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1966, 4.

⁵¹⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 27.

⁵¹⁷ *Volkert & Associates, Inc. Home Page*, http://www.volkert.com/Awards/Volkert_percent20Awards.htm, accessed 12 July 2004.

⁵¹⁸ Greer, 17.

⁵¹⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 5.

⁵²⁰ Greer, 18.

to fund the project without assurance that a pedestrian bridge would be built between the park and the aquarium.⁵²¹ In the end, neither the aquarium nor the pedestrian bridge was built.

The park's namesake, Benjamin Banneker, was "America's First Black Man of Science," and a plaque in the park provides a brief history of this significant figure. The location has also been designated as a possible site for a future monument or memorial – likely to commemorate African Americans. In 1998, Congress authorized a non-profit group, Washington Interdependence Council, to investigate this prospect. By 2006, the group hopes to construct a commemorative statue and visitor center at the Overlook site, or elsewhere on L'Enfant Plaza.⁵²² If this project is completed, the underground parking garage, along with a transportation center, might also be realized as well. Additional discussions are also in progress, however, regarding other possible uses of the site, such as for the construction of a Major League baseball stadium.

L'ENFANT PLAZA

The 6.5-acre L'Enfant Plaza is located at the east side of the Tenth Street Mall. I.M. Pei designed the site's master plan, which includes buildings on three sides of the plaza, an opening to the promenade on the fourth (west) side, and another building across the promenade from the plaza. Construction began in 1963.⁵²³ The plaza itself is outlined with roadways and contains a green public plaza and a glass pyramid skylight, in its center. Prior to the 1999 construction of the skylight, a fountain stood in the plaza's center.⁵²⁴ Underground, it includes a shopping arcade, parking, and the later addition of a Metro rail station. While the plaza was intended to be the magnet to draw visitors onto L'Enfant Promenade and into the Southwest,⁵²⁵ the absence of the full menu of planned cultural and entertainment venues has led to only partial fulfillment of that intended role. Two of the buildings that were built were geared toward use by space-related agencies, such as NASA, and the other two had more general office uses.

An article on the plaza and mall for *Progressive Architecture* credits the Pei firm's years of work in bringing the complex to fruition. At the same time, however, it criticizes the area for being out of step with the latest city planning processes when it was finally realized. It closes by questioning the logic of its style of planning:

“If we are to judge it in terms of current planning priorities, then we must question the validity of basing an urban renewal solution on the creation of rentable office space for

⁵²¹ “From Module to Mall,” 98.

⁵²² Washington Interdependence Council,” *Cultural Tourism D.C. Home Page*, http://www.culturaltourismdc.org/deh_tourism2608/deh_tourism_show.htm?doc_id=43957, accessed 5 August 2004.

⁵²³ John B. Willmann, “A Walk in Southwest Will Refresh Tired Eyes.”

⁵²⁴ “JBG to Rejigger L'Enfant,” *Washington Business Journal*, 7 November 2003, <http://washington.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2003/11/10/story1.html>, accessed August 5, 2004.

⁵²⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 12.

an industry devoted to getting us to the moon when we here on earth stagnate in cities that are quietly dying for lack of adequate planning.”⁵²⁶

Most recently, JBG Cos., which owns the buildings on the north and east of the plaza, began working with architects Hickok Warner Cole in pursuing redevelopment of the overall site.⁵²⁷

NORTH (ASTRAL) AND SOUTH (COMSAT) BUILDINGS

Architect Araldo A. Cossutta, a partner with I.M. Pei and Partners, designed the North and South buildings, or the Astral and Comsat buildings. The Astral building is located at 955 L’Enfant Plaza, on the northern side, while the Comsat building is located across the plaza, at 950 L’Enfant Plaza. The Comsat building is located on the former site of the Desmore Alley residential community and Isaac Fairbrother Public School.⁵²⁸ Both buildings were dedicated in November 1967⁵²⁹ and completed in 1968 as part of phase I of L’Enfant Plaza, which included the additional construction of the public plaza, an underground shopping arcade, a theater, a service station, and a parking garage.⁵³⁰ The twin eight-story above-ground portions of the rectangular concrete buildings have concrete columns and spandrel beams encasing large recessed glass windows, 24’-6” long. The recessing was intended to eliminate the need for window coverings.⁵³¹ The projected cornices at the top serve to “counteract the monumental scale of Washington and help establish the intimacy typical of the European square.” The prestressed building corners provide wind bracing and house air-conditioning risers.⁵³² While the front and back facades emphasize both the columns and spandrels, the side façades emphasize the wide spandrels and only the corner columns.

On their interiors, the buildings incorporated technological innovation into the ceilings, integrating mechanical and electrical systems, and thereby decreasing the space requirements for those systems in the structures.⁵³³ Saphier, Lerner, Schindler, Inc. used columns on the interior space to break up offices into 3’-1” x 6’-2” modular units. A partition system facilitates further customization.⁵³⁴ The original office tenants included Boeing, NASA and the Apollo space program, while Comsat occupied the south building.⁵³⁵ In addition to these, the ground and mezzanine floors accommodate small commercial establishments.

Today, the General Services Administration (GSA) leases the entire 85,061 square feet of the Astral building from JBG Cos., which bought the building in 2003. The GSA leases the

⁵²⁶ “From Module to Mall,” 100.

⁵²⁷ “JBG to Rejigger L’Enfant.”

⁵²⁸ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 232.

⁵²⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 5.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵³¹ “From Module to Mall,” 98.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 97.

⁵³³ Christopher Weeks, *AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C.*, Third Edition (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 276.

⁵³⁴ Design Research, 40; “From Module to Mall,” 98.

⁵³⁵ Greer, 18; DC RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 5.

entire 260,910 square feet Comsat building from Heyman Properties, which bought the building in 2001.⁵³⁶

EAST (LOEW'S L'ENFANT PLAZA HOTEL) AND WEST (USPS) BUILDINGS

The East and West buildings were part of the second phase of L'Enfant Plaza construction. Architect Vlastimil Koubek designed both, and they are not twin structures.

The East building is located at 470-490 L'Enfant Plaza, constructed above Ninth Street. Construction began in fiscal year 1971 and finished in summer 1973. The building, with twelve above-ground stories and several below, is located on the east side of the plaza, between the North and South twin buildings. It functions as part office building and part hotel, with the hotel's 372 rooms occupying the top four floors, including a swimming pool on the ninth floor.⁵³⁷ The hotel, managed by the New York-based Loews Hotel Corporation, opened as the Loews L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in 1973.⁵³⁸ In 2003, JBG Cos. purchased the building. The rectangular plan building itself has less elongated windows and less pronounced columns and spandrels than the Astral and Comsat buildings. Instead, it has strong columns on the exterior ends and a heavy three-story overhanging roof level, with a grid of simple recessed windows on the eight stories underneath. The corners are indented in, accentuating the overhanging.

The West building, located at 475 L'Enfant Plaza, is separated from the rest of the plaza by the promenade. Construction workers broke ground for the building on February 18, 1969,⁵³⁹ and construction finished in 1971. In 1972, it was purchased by the U.S. Postal Service,⁵⁴⁰ which still maintains its headquarters there today. Above ground, like the hotel across the plaza, it includes twelve stories of office and commercial space. In total, it has sixteen stories, including underground parking for cars.⁵⁴¹ The massive rectangular building shares stylistic traits with each of its L'Enfant Plaza neighbors. Like the Comsat and Astral buildings, it employs a grid of columns and spandrels encasing a sea of wide recessed window bays. Unlike the Comsat and Astral, however, these bays are broken up into separated windowpanes, rather than a single, long stretch of glass. Like the East building, the West building has a massive, multi-story, flat overhanging concrete roof. This overhang is less pronounced than on its eastern neighbor, however.

Town Center/Waterside Mall

While Zeckendorf envisioned L'Enfant Plaza as a center for the city, nation, and the world, he saw Town Center as a commercial and civic locus of a more local sort. Its fourteen

⁵³⁶ "General Services Administration (GSA) Inventory of Owned and Leased Properties," *General Services Administration Home Page*, <http://www.iolp.gsa.gov/iolp/BuildingsList.asp?sID=11>, accessed August 5, 2004; "JBG to Rejigger L'Enfant."

⁵³⁷ DC RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 13; DC RLA, *Annual Report* 1969, 25.

⁵³⁸ Greer, 18.

⁵³⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 25.

⁵⁴⁰ DC RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 13.

⁵⁴¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, ii, 24.

acres of land include facilities for community shopping, community activities, recreation, and housing (as discussed previously). The center's regional nature was emphasized by the NCPC in its plan for Project Area C:

The market area for the commercial core of the Town Center and the size of shopping area needed to serve the Southwest has been studied in detail. Such a shopping center is designed as a community shopping center. It is not intended to serve an area larger than the Southwest; it is not a regional shopping center; it will not compete with downtown Washington . . . [The Southwest's boundaries] are major ones. They form a definitive perimeter and discourage travel outside the area for neighborhood shopping. At the same time, these boundaries discourage shopping from other areas, except for some business that might result from through traffic.⁵⁴²

In addition to shopping alone, the center was also intended to encourage neighborhood cohesiveness, serving the needs of all of its residents. The community facilities include the center's four churches, three parks, and library. Planners envisioned that these would encourage daytime and evening activity, as the library and churches incorporate space for neighborhood meeting rooms in addition to their primary facilities.⁵⁴³

Third, Sixth, Eye and M streets bound the area of the completed project. Its centerpiece, the Town Center shopping center, later transformed into the Waterside Mall, and now called Waterfront, occupies the central portion. It is located at 401 M Street.

TOWN CENTER

Architect I.M. Pei, who also designed the four apartment towers that are located on the site, designed the first phase of the Town Center shopping center. Webb & Knapp was the developer. This first phase was completed to serve the needs of the first residents of the new Southwest, while the second was delayed until there was sufficient demand to warrant expansion. The original shopping center included eight stores in a low-rise suburban-type commercial strip. It included the following establishments: Peoples Drug Store, Safeway, Harry's Liquors, Tower Dry Cleaners, Town Center Bowling, American Security and Trust and a U.S. Post Office. Only the bowling alley had not been a resident of the old Southwest.⁵⁴⁴

In proposing the Town Center, developer William Zeckendorf required the abandonment of plans for an additional commercial center in Project Area B. He instead preferred that all Southwest residents congregate at the commercial center on his development parcel. A series of delays in his plans, however, left the early residents without any commercial infrastructure until Town Center opened. Construction on the first phase of Town Center began on January 15, 1960, almost six months after Capitol Park Apartments' completion,⁵⁴⁵ and finished in 1961.

⁵⁴² U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area C*, 21-22.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

⁵⁴⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 20.

⁵⁴⁵ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 32.

WATERSIDE MALL/WATERSIDE

Waterside Mall was the second phase of the Town Center commercial development. It was designed by architect Chloethiel Woodard Smith, in cooperation with the NCPC, as part of a new master plan for the Town Center complex.⁵⁴⁶ Charles S. Bresler and Burton J. Reiner, the individuals who bought out the bulk of Webb & Knapp's Southwest property in 1964, developed the expanded complex.⁵⁴⁷

The mall is located to the left of the original commercial strip. Its design required the closing of Fourth Street, a primary commercial roadway in the old Southwest. The mall originally consisted of two floors of retail shopping space below one floor of office space, although today that mixture is reversed. While originally envisioned as a complex of 100 shops, only twenty-six were realized.⁵⁴⁸ The roof was originally intended to provide terraces for outdoor restaurants, although those never materialized.⁵⁴⁹ In addition, twin ten-story office towers flank the two sides. The overall building complex forms a U-shape around a surface parking lot, which today provides a Metro rail entrance at its center. There is also an underground parking garage. The one-story office space bridge connects the office towers. Originally, the towers of this second phase were intended to include residential space as well, but they were instead converted to office space.⁵⁵⁰ The primary construction material in the towers is concrete, similar in color to that used at L'Enfant Plaza, surrounding brown reflective glass windows. The façade of the shopping center is mainly covered in beige brick.⁵⁵¹

Construction on phase two began in 1968 and finished in 1972.⁵⁵² Later construction of a four-story office tower on Fourth Street was completed in October 1981, to officially mark the completion of the mall.⁵⁵³

Architecture critic Wolf von Eckardt heralded the coming of this new development, forecasting, "It will not only physically replace Pei's suburban shopping center but also remove its unsightly curse, the surrounding parking lots. Strongly enclosed by the massive apt slabs it promises to be not another row of roadside stands but a truly urban outdoor living room."⁵⁵⁴ However, the realized complex has been much less successful. It has never been the thriving center that was envisioned, and many of the stores in the expanded indoor mall space are now closed, with the first ones having left before construction was even complete. Residents have long complained about the inadequacy of the shopping facilities, including the original small size of the Safeway grocery store, the lack of a major draw like a department store (as prohibited by

⁵⁴⁶ SCC and SWNA, 14.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Barbara Bright-Sagui and Claudia Levy, "Aid Sought for Waterside Mall," *Washington Post*, 3 March 1974, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁵⁴⁹ SCC and SWNA, 14.

⁵⁵⁰ Protopappas and Brown, 53.

⁵⁵¹ Scott and Lee, 244.

⁵⁵² Ibid., 243.

⁵⁵³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1981, 18.

⁵⁵⁴ Quoted in Design Research, 41.

the plan), and the general absence of resident-focused retail; the inconvenience of having to pay for underground parking; and the disruptions of building construction for over a decade, and Metro construction that blocked the main entrance from December 1973 through 1978;⁵⁵⁵ and the conditions of vandalism in the complex. Merchant occupants, equally dissatisfied with the level of customers and profit, have expressed similar discontent. Current occupants in this mostly-empty facility include a Safeway supermarket, a CVS pharmacy, space for the Southwest Neighborhood Association, an indoor café, a liquor store and several other shops.

Beginning with the completion of the first office space in mid-1971, the Environmental Protection Agency occupied much of the buildings.⁵⁵⁶ However, it has since moved out. In 2001, a new set of developers – Kaempfer Company and Forest City Enterprises – took up the task of revitalizing this center, including the task of finding a new tenant. The latest indications are that Fannie Mae will take over much of this space. Working in partnership with the city, they also plan to revitalize the mall (which they have renamed Waterside) by reintroducing Fourth Street to the site; this is but one part of plans described as the broader Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.

Waterfront

FORMER CONDITIONS

Despite the old Southwest's blighted condition, its approximately one mile long waterfront was still an active maritime center for Washington, D.C., with numerous boats, seafood restaurants, and its old fish market. Perhaps the greatest impediment to revival of the waterfront was the sewer system of the old Southwest, which directly deposited both rainwater and sewage into the Washington Channel.⁵⁵⁷

As its functions as a commercial port began to diminish over time, the U.S. Corps of Engineers led early waterfront redevelopment. Its redevelopment plan, approved by Congress in 1945, included the installation of a new bulkhead, the rebuilding of small boat and yacht facilities, and the construction of four new piers – for the D.C. fire-boat, the Wilson sightseeing line, cruise ships, and the Washington-Norfolk boat. Almost a decade and a half later, only approximately one-third of the plan had come to fruition, including the construction of two of the piers, several hundred feet of the bulkhead, and some small boat docks.⁵⁵⁸

Waterfront renewal under the Southwest Urban Renewal Plan, then, offered several opportunities. First, it was a chance to complete the previously unfinished redevelopment effort. Second, it could improve a feature of Washington, D.C., that many believed should be an asset,

⁵⁵⁵ William H. Jones, "Waterside Mall Impasse Broken," *Washington Post*, 20 June 1978, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁵⁵⁶ "Environmental Unit to Move to SW Mall," *Washington Post*, 10 March 1971, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁵⁵⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 8.

⁵⁵⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 21.

rather than an eyesore. As such, the RLA held out Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens as an example of the sort of showplace that the waterfront could be for the city.⁵⁵⁹

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

While the plan for Project Area C included waterfront redevelopment, in July 1960, the Federal City Council hired Chloethiel Woodard Smith to develop a separate waterfront master plan for the 27.5-acre area.⁵⁶⁰ An amended version of this plan, developed in 1965, was eventually enacted. The plan called for the development of an "urban edge" along the river, with a twenty-foot wide public walkway lying between the water and nearby waterfront development.⁵⁶¹ Waterfront land use would mix marina facilities, restaurants, tourist attractions, and community facilities, such as a church, public parks, and police and fire fighting facilities.⁵⁶² The public would maintain ownership of the overall waterfront, with the National Park Service maintaining the parks, and commercial properties being leased by the RLA through ninety-nine-year leases.⁵⁶³

WATERFRONT ELEMENTS

Several basic infrastructure improvements paved the way for expansive waterfront redevelopment. Foremost among these was the upgrading of the Southwest's sewage system. As part of urban renewal, the District of Columbia Department of Sanitary Engineering built a separate sewer system and sanitary treatment plan for sewage. The RLA called this "the most important step possible to clean up the Washington Channel."⁵⁶⁴ Construction of a new bulkhead also began very early on in the process. Between March and approximately December 1962, the bulkhead was extended out into the channel to add 4.5 acres to the waterfront.⁵⁶⁵ The curving of Maine Avenue further inland additionally expanded waterfront land area. This relocation, which was completed in June 1963, increased the area available for the development of parks and commercial facilities.⁵⁶⁶ Finally, flood protection decks were constructed between 1968 and 1970 in order to make way for the waterfront parks and commercial development.⁵⁶⁷

Commercial development was a key element necessary to further revive the waterfront, as well as to restore former businesses of the old waterfront. Such activity began in fiscal year 1967, when the RLA offered its first site on the Southwest waterfront for redevelopment. RLA

⁵⁵⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 22.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Anderson Notter Finegold, et. al., 8.

⁵⁶² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 21.

⁵⁶³ Anderson Notter Finegold, et. al., 8-9.

⁵⁶⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 21.

⁵⁶⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 19.

⁵⁶⁶ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 17; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 19; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 11.

⁵⁶⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 4; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 27.

reported, “the site, designated for boat sales and marine related activities, has been offered on a priority basis to displaced businessmen in accordance with a special act of Congress.”⁵⁶⁸

HOGATE’S/H₂O

Hogate’s Seafood Restaurant was the first restaurant to be built on the Southwest Waterfront. A long-time resident of the waterfront, its new building was built at 800 Water Street, near the intersection of Maine Avenue and Ninth Street. On May 19, 1971, a “waterbreaking” was held to mark the start of construction of the \$3 million single-story building with seating capacity for 900 patrons. The restaurant opened for business in March 1972⁵⁶⁹ and closed its doors in October 2001. Today, it operates as H₂O, a combined restaurant and nightclub.

PHILLIPS FLAGSHIP

The Flagship Restaurant was the second of the former waterfront restaurants to experience a rebirth in the new Southwest. Another single-story structure, this \$1.2 million building had seating capacity for 700 patrons, along with a banquet room and cocktail lounge. It is located at 900 Water Street, across one of the waterfront parks from H₂O. Construction began in 1971 and finished in October 1972.⁵⁷⁰ In December 1985, it was taken over by Phillips Foods, Inc.,⁵⁷¹ and it is now called Phillips Flagship.

ZANZIBAR ON THE WATERFRONT

Several other former Southwest restaurants and seafood stores were also relocated to the waterfront. These included Glasgow’s Seafood Store, Cannon Seafood, and Ellis Raw Bar,⁵⁷² all of which took up residence at 700 Water Street. This space is now occupied by Zanzibar on the Waterfront, a combined restaurant and nightclub.

CAPITAL YACHT CLUB

The Capital Yacht Club was another of the old Southwest tenants to receive a new home through urban renewal. The club, which was founded in 1892, built its first clubhouse in Southwest in 1923. In September 1972, construction started on a new building, which was completed in 1973, dedicated in 1974, and renovated in 1992. The building, as constructed in 1973, includes a clubhouse, as well as a dining area and bar, lockers, showers, and 100 boat slips.⁵⁷³ It is located at 1000 Water Street, at the northern end of the waterfront, between Philip’s

⁵⁶⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 3.

⁵⁶⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 9; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, 20; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 15.

⁵⁷⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 15; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, iii.

⁵⁷¹ “Legend of Phillips Seafood Restaurants,” *Phillips Seafood Homepage*, <http://www.phillipsfoods.com/html/legend.html>, accessed 13 July 2004.

⁵⁷² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 26.

⁵⁷³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 15; “Facilities Available at the Capital Yacht Club,” *The Capital Yacht Club Home Page*, <http://www.capitalyachtclub.net/facilities/facility.htm>, accessed 13 July 2004.

Flagship Restaurant and the fish market. Today, Jenny's Asian Fusion restaurant occupies the second floor.

CHANNEL INN HOTEL

The Channel Motor Inn was the only hotel to be built on the waterfront, and it currently bills itself as the Channel Inn Hotel, "Washington D.C.'s only waterfront hotel."⁵⁷⁴ The 100-room hotel, which also includes a promenade-side restaurant, is located at 650 Water Street, at the corner of Maine Avenue and Seventh Street. Construction on the building began in 1972 and finished in 1973.⁵⁷⁵

GANGPLANK MARINA

The Gangplank Marina is a 309-slip marina located at 600 Water Street. It occupies an area of approximately 13.47 acres, including riparian rights, which includes the slips, a marina sales facility, a tower, and several docks, among other structures. There is also adjacent parking. The marina currently serves as a permanent home to many live-aboards and several commercial boats, as well as a temporary home for transient and recreational boaters.⁵⁷⁶ The USS Sequoia Presidential Yacht is included among its current residents. Construction on the facility began in 1972.⁵⁷⁷ The facility is likely to be significantly impacted by the current Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.

Secondary Buildings/Sites of the New Southwest

In addition to these three major commercial areas, the redeveloped Southwest also included many other secondary sites, encompassing both first and secondary commercial usage. Generally speaking, these sites were located in two main areas: on the property north of the Southwest Expressway and south of the railroad tracks, or in Project Area C-1, just west of South Capitol Street. These sites included a wholesale food center, a hotel, office buildings, and a handful of small commercial centers that were placed near government office buildings and South Capitol Street's Automotive Center. Some of the more significant of these commercial buildings and sites are discussed below.

Commercial Facilities Between Seventh, the Railroad, and the Expressway

SOUTHWEST MARKET CENTER

One of the points of disagreement during the urban renewal planning stage concerned how to deal with second commercial facilities in the new plan. The most significant of these

⁵⁷⁴ *Capital Inn Hotel Home Page*, <http://www.channelinn.com/>, accessed 13 July 2004.

⁵⁷⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 15.

⁵⁷⁶ U.S. National Capital Revitalization Corporation, "RFP for Management Services, Gangplank Marina, Washington, D.C.," August 2001, http://www.nercdc.com/docs/rfp/MarinaRFP_082801.pdf, accessed 13 July 2004: 4.

⁵⁷⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, 20.

facilities was the old Southwest's wholesale food market, one of Washington, D.C.'s principle food market centers⁵⁷⁸ and a major supplier of meat and produce to the city's restaurants. The market was located in the northern portion of the quadrant, with a major cluster of buildings at Twelfth Street and a minor grouping at Fourth Street, between the railroad tracks and the proposed expressway. In most early plans, such as the Justement-Smith Plan, these facilities, including the Twelfth Street location, were retained, with office buildings strategically erected as necessary to shield views of the center. The NCPC's 1956 Ninth Street Mall proposal was also driven in large part by a desire to maintain the market at its original location.⁵⁷⁹ In the end, however, the RLA decided only to retain two major Fourth Street buildings (the District Grocery Store warehouse and the Terminal Refrigeration plant – the second of which was converted in 1983 by Keyes Condon Florance into the Washington Design Center⁵⁸⁰), to add additional facilities there as part of Project Area B development, and to level the Twelfth Street location to make way for the Southwest Expressway.⁵⁸¹

The RLA's plan involved moving some of the former Twelfth Street tenants to new facilities just north of the Southwest Expressway, between Fourth and Second streets. Thus, upon the recommendation of the RLA, a group of eight of the displaced food dealers and one displaced restaurant organized itself into the Southwest Market Center, Inc., with Morris Kraft at the helm. The group obtained financing assistance from the Small Business Administration and the Riggs National Bank, and in April 1959 executed a lease for a parcel on which would be built a new, shared warehouse and distribution facility,⁵⁸² designed by architects Edmund W. Dreyfus and Associates.⁵⁸³ Ground was broken on June 12, 1959, and construction finished later that same year. When the Market Center opened on November 1, 1959, it was the first new business in operation in the new Southwest. The RLA reported, "After eight months of operation . . . business is at least 20 percent better than in the old location and every day the potential increases as redevelopment moves ahead in Southwest Washington."⁵⁸⁴

The Independence Square office complex, whose tenants include the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and NASA, has since replaced the Southwest Market Center building.

AMERICAN ROAD BUILDERS BUILDING

The American Road Builders Building is located at 525 School Street, at the corner of Sixth and School streets. The five-story, 40,000 square foot building was designed by the architectural firm Mills, Petticord & Mills. It was completed in fiscal year 1965⁵⁸⁵ and dedicated

⁵⁷⁸ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 4.

⁵⁷⁹ Albrook, "By Shifting Zeckendorf Site NCPC Group Maps Mall Plan Change."

⁵⁸⁰ Scott & Lee, 235.

⁵⁸¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 23.

⁵⁸² Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 29.

⁵⁸³ Design Research, 27.

⁵⁸⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 22.

⁵⁸⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1965, 4; D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area."

in June 1965.⁵⁸⁶ The ground floor, encased predominantly in glass, contains commercial use, and the office space on the floors above is raised on pilotis. The exterior consists of light-colored concrete, with recessed windows, encased by concrete that angles in from both the top and the bottom. The top floor is also recessed, with a continuous balcony surrounding it, and the structural columns continuing up to support the overhanging slab roof. A later building occupied by Northrup Grumman two doors down to its east, at 475 School Street, mimics the character of the façade in a more contemporary style. The building is currently fully leased by the GSA,⁵⁸⁷ with occupants including the Institute of Transportation Engineers. It is one of the two commercial structures built in this portion of Southwest during urban renewal that still remain.

COFFEY-SMITH ASSOCIATES BUILDING

The Coffey-Smith Associates Building is located at 400 Sixth Street, at the corner of Sixth and D streets, immediately behind the American Road Builders Building. This was the former site of the D.C. Department of Education building.⁵⁸⁸ It was constructed during the 1960s, but the exact date is unknown. The structure is five stories in height, with a glassed in first floor, the entirety of which is raised up on a concrete porch that surrounds the building. The façade is covered in light tan brick. The windows are arranged in vertical strips, alternating with a brown plastic-like material. The structural columns are made of off-white aggregate. Washington, D.C.'s Child and Family Services Bureau currently occupies the building.

BUILDINGS THAT NO LONGER EXIST

The remaining office buildings constructed in the triangle bounded by the railroad tracks, Seventh Street, and the Expressway have all been replaced. These include a Gulf Service Station at Fourth and F Streets (now a parking lot), the Army Times Building on School Street, and other structures. The undeveloped plot on E Street between Third and Fourth streets is also now being developed with office and residential high-rise buildings.

SMITH-CORONA MERCHANT, INC. OFFICE BUILDING

The Smith-Corona Marchant, Inc. Office Building was located at the southeast corner of E and Sixth streets. It was designed as general corporate offices by architect Wendell B. Hallett and developed by Donohoe, Bord & Earnest.⁵⁸⁹ Today the building, and that of Capital Film Laboratories to its east, has been replaced by a new building located at 500 E Street. The U.S. Social Security Administration and U.S. International Trade Commission occupy the new building.

⁵⁸⁶ Tom Kuennen, "ARBTA Broadens Scope as 'Golden Age' of Roadbuilding Unfolds," *Transportation Builder* (July 2001), 31, http://www.expresswaysonline.com/pdf/July2001_100th.pdf, accessed 5 August 2004.

⁵⁸⁷ "General Services Administration (GSA) Inventory of Owned and Leased Properties."

⁵⁸⁸ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 235.

⁵⁸⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1964, 9; D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area."

CAPITAL FILM LABORATORIES

Capital Film Laboratories was located at 470 E Street. Architect Wendell B. Hallet designed this structure, which consisted of general office and warehouse space.⁵⁹⁰ As with the site of the former Smith-Corona Marchant, Inc. Office Building, this site is now occupied by a new building.

OTIS ELEVATOR BUILDING

The Otis Elevator Building was located at 465 School Street. It was designed by the architectural firm Clas & Riggs and offered a sales room and administrative offices.⁵⁹¹ This building, along with the Army Times building to its west, has since been replaced by the office building at 400 Virginia Avenue.

GAS AND SERVICE STATIONS

Gas and service stations were located in the second commercial area between the railroad tracks and Southwest Freeway – parts of Project Areas B and C. These included the Gulf Service Station at Fourth and F streets and Phillips Service Station, located adjacent to the Southwest Market Center. Both were leased by public auction in fall 1959⁵⁹² and completed in fiscal year 1961.⁵⁹³ None of these exist any longer. In general, then, whereas the old Southwest scattered automotive services around its land area, the new Southwest clustered them in second commercial areas. In addition, the RLA ensured that the plan, signage, and architecture of these new facilities were “appropriate and dignified.”⁵⁹⁴

Commercial Facilities West of South Capitol Street

BERNSTEIN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

As with many of the restaurants on the waterfront, and those in the Southwest Market Center, Inc., the Bernstein Neighborhood Center was an example of a former Southwest business returning after urban renewal. The 37,000 square feet of mixed commercial and office space provide a neighborhood shopping center at 25 M Street, between Half and South Capitol streets.⁵⁹⁵ Mr. Nathan Bernstein developed the property, which originally included Bernstein’s Liquor, a 7-11 convenience store, and several other facilities.⁵⁹⁶ The more than \$4.1 million construction process began in January 1965 and completed that summer.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁰ D.C. RLA, “The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area.”

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 24.

⁵⁹³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 21.

⁵⁹⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 24.

⁵⁹⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1966, 5.

⁵⁹⁶ SCC and SWNA, 15.

⁵⁹⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1966, 5; “New Stores Center Begun In Southwest,” *Washington Post*, 28 January 1965, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Today, the three-story tan brick building offers retail space on the bottom and office space on the two floors above. Pilotis on the first floor support the overhanging second floor. The pilotis are covered in off-white aggregate. Continuous window bands on the two upper floors are interrupted vertically by bands of brick. Today it operates as the Virginia Williams Family Resource Center, a homeless center.

BEST WESTERN CAPITOL SKYLINE HOTEL

Despite the generally industrial nature of much of Project Area C-1, its proximity to the Capitol and its major nearby thoroughfare, South Capitol Street, made it an appealing site for the construction of the Skyline Motor Inn. The inn (now hotel) is located at 10 Eye Street, at the southwestern corner of Eye and South Capitol streets. The architectural firm Lapidus, Harle & Liebman, which also designed many other hotels in Miami, New York, and Las Vegas, designed the building. The Halsa Corporation, of New York, developed the structure.⁵⁹⁸ The inn was part of the winning entry in Design Competition No. 4, which took place in 1961. The overall entry was called the Chalk Center, which included the hotel, as well as an office building, parking garage and transportation center.⁵⁹⁹ Ground was broken on the 203-unit structure on November 7, 1961, and construction completed a little over a year later.

When it opened, the Skyline Motor Inn became the new Southwest's first hotel,⁶⁰⁰ joined over a decade later by the Channel Motor Inn and Loews L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, and later by a Holiday Inn. Today the hotel is operated by Best Western and is known as the Best Western Capitol Skyline Hotel.⁶⁰¹ The building itself is four-story rectangular concrete form. Its façade is dominated by numerous rectangular bays, with rounded edges, containing three windows each. In addition, each floor contains one long window bay containing fifteen windows within. The curvature of the window bays extends to a pavilion roof atop a one-story neighboring structure. The building sits right on South Capitol Street and offers views of the Capitol dome.

AUTOMOTIVE CENTER

In addition to the second commercial facilities built between the railroad and the Southwest Expressway, another cluster of second commercial land use was located within Project Area C-1. This area provided an opportunity to group many of the automotive service facilities of the old Southwest, including sites for repair work, parts distribution, tire recapping, and radiator repairs. Its location was deemed appropriate for such uses given its isolation from residential areas, as well as the heavy truck and commercial traffic along nearby South Capitol Street. When the center was built, it was strategically located near a motor vehicle testing station, which opened in 1961 (replacing the former facility in Southwest at Tenth Street, between F and G streets⁶⁰²), and a fire engine garage⁶⁰³ – both of which still operate today.

⁵⁹⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 14.

⁵⁹⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 21.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 18; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 12.

⁶⁰¹ *Best Western Home Page*, <http://www.bestwestern.com/>, accessed 13 July 2004.

⁶⁰² *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 231.

⁶⁰³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 23.

Some of the specific businesses included within the center were a Texaco Service Station, an Esso Service Station, and the Humble Oil Service Station. Today, the site of the Humble Oil Service Station houses an Exxon gas station and a fast food restaurant. The Capitol Police Vehicle Maintenance Center recently took over the one-story facility at 67 K Street, which was formerly known as the Miller-Dudley Building.

HEALTH AND WELFARE COUNCIL BUILDING

The Health and Welfare Council Building was located at 95 M Street. Unlike most other buildings in Southwest, it was set back from the roadway, with a large parking lot in front, and trees sprinkled within. The building itself is a beige brick structure with haphazard rectangular windows throughout. Concrete slab overhang each of the building's three stories. Unusually, the first floor lacks pilotis. Following the 1974 merger of the United Givers Fund, the Health and Welfare Council, and the United Black Fund, the building became the home of the United Way of the National Capital Area.⁶⁰⁴ It still functions in this regard today.

COMMERCIAL FACILITIES WEST OF TENTH STREET

500 TWELFTH STREET ASSOCIATES BUILDING

The 500 Twelfth Street Associates Building was located on the eastern side of the Eleventh Street Expressway, at 500 Twelfth St. Group Hospitalization, Inc., initially occupied much of the seven-floor office building. Construction completed in fiscal year 1968.⁶⁰⁵ The site has since been redeveloped as the two-building Potomac Center office building complex owned by JBG Companies and JER Partners. While the north building is still under construction, the south building is fully leased to the government, with current tenants including HUD and the Department of Education.⁶⁰⁶

Government Offices

Former Conditions and Rationale for Redevelopment

Prior to the start of Southwest's urban renewal, Federal office buildings dominated the northern edge of the quadrant. The 1901 McMillan plan deemed that Federal buildings would line Constitution and Independence avenues; but by 1950, only a few structures existed along or near the southern side of Independence Avenue. These included the U.S. Department of Agriculture, South Building, at Fourteenth Street and Independence Avenue (1930-1937); the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, at Fourteenth Street, between C and D streets (1938);⁶⁰⁷ the

⁶⁰⁴ "History and Mission," *United Way of the National Capital Area Home Page*, <http://www.unitedwaynca.org/website/index.cfm?c=history.and.mission>, accessed 8 August 2004.

⁶⁰⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 1, 5; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, ii.

⁶⁰⁶ "JBG to Rejigger L'Enfant."

⁶⁰⁷ Neither the U.S. Department of Agriculture Building nor the Bureau of Engraving and Printing Annex was located within the boundaries of the urban renewal area.

Mary E. Switzer Memorial Building, then the Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) Building and now the Health and Human Services (HHS) Building, located at 330 C Street (1939-1941); the Wilbur J. Cohen Building, then the north HEW Building, and now the home of the Broadcasting Board of Governance, International Broadcasting Bureau, located at 330 Independence Avenue (1939-1941); and the GSA Regional Office (1930-1935), located at Seventh and D streets.⁶⁰⁸

Southwest's urban renewal offered several opportunities related to these Federal structures. First, as already discussed, it presented a chance to fulfill the plan that Congress had accepted in 1901. Second, it offered a mechanism for replacing the visually unappealing temporary structures, also known as "temporaries" or "tempos," that had been constructed along the Mall as emergency war offices during World War I. Structures of this type lined Independence Avenue from Eleventh Street to Sixth Street.⁶⁰⁹ Finally, it gave Southwest the chance to become a major employment center for Washington's main business – government.

The tempos were much criticized, not only for aesthetic reasons, but also for purposes of security and efficiency. Constructed quite hastily, with the intention that they would be eliminated two years after the end of the war, the structures were considered "extremely vulnerable to enemy attack and a fire hazard."⁶¹⁰ In addition, returning to aesthetics and the symbolism of the Capital, they were considered an inappropriate visual along Washington's grand National Mall. The erection of more appropriate Federal structures would also create a "dramatic northern boundary" for Southwest.⁶¹¹

As an employment area, the completed Southwest employment center was expected to provide employment for more than 85,000 employees, approximately three times the employment level in the Federal Triangle at the time.⁶¹² The growth of this area as a business district would yield many benefits to Southwest, including creating a market for the planned commercial establishments and residential communities. Even more simply, it would help to bring people from outside the quadrant into the long-isolated Southwest.

Redevelopment Process

One of the first major steps in the drive to redevelop the area north of the Southwest Expressway with government buildings was the General Services Administration's 1954 approval of construction of new Federal buildings along Independence Avenue.⁶¹³ Next, in 1955, Congress passed a special lease-purchase act to construct Federal office buildings on four such sites. Under this program, Congress would specify building requirements, even down to the

⁶⁰⁸ U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 321; Scott & Lee, 234-235, 237.

⁶⁰⁹ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 202-204.

⁶¹⁰ "Non-Essential Buildings OK'd for Southwest," unknown newspaper (Washington, D.C.), 18 August 1954, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 19.

⁶¹¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 14.

⁶¹² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 4; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 9; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 27.

⁶¹³ U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 322.

level of architecture, and solicit bids from contractors for financing of the construction. Congress would pay them back, with the appropriate interest, in annual payments over twenty-five years. Also at this time, the Eisenhower administration voiced its commitment to eliminate the temporaries.⁶¹⁴

In January 1957, the RLA complied with a request to give expedited priority to those four sites (which is likely to have led to delays elsewhere in the urban renewal area, at Town Center). Progress halted, however, when the lease-purchase act was repealed at that same time. The next boost to the program did not occur until 1959, when Congress directly appropriated funds for the first building's construction. The next year, it followed up with appropriated funds for the next two buildings. Funds were also available at that time for construction of the fourth building as well.⁶¹⁵

Buildings of the New Southwest

While many new Federal office buildings have been built in the northern portion of Southwest since the 1960 commencement of the first such building's construction, the following section will describe those buildings built during the 1960s. These include the first four buildings designated by Congress – Federal Office Buildings numbers 5, 6, 8, and 10 – as well as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Building, the Nassif Building (a privately developed structure that serves as the home of the U.S. Department of Transportation), and the Reporters Building (another privately developed building that is fully leased by the GSA for occupancy by tenants such as the Department of Agriculture and Coastal America).

Federal Office Building No. 6 (Department of Education)

Federal Office Building No. 6 is located at 400 Maryland Avenue near the southwest corner of Fourth Street and Independence Avenue. Architects Chatelaine, Gauger & Nolen and Faulkner, Kinsbury & Stenhouse designed the building. Completed in July 1961, it was originally occupied by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) and the main headquarters of NASA. In 1979, the Department of Education broke off from HEW, which was renamed the Department of Health and Human Services. The Department of Education now has its headquarters in the building.

The structure itself has is a six-story rectangular block with a recessed seventh story above, and a single utility level above that. It is raised on pilotis on the first floor, with only a narrow corridor between the building's first floor glass facade and the pilotis. The pilotis are covered in aggregate and a gray stone cover layer. A grid of tan concrete columns and spandrels surrounds equally spaced vertical rectangular windows, which are situated flush with the rest of façade. In recent years, the front doorways have been encased in temporary porticos of mock "little red schoolhouses." The building is set back from Maryland Avenue, and a barren plaza in front mirrors the tan and gray colors of the building's façade. While the western end of the plaza

⁶¹⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 19.

⁶¹⁵ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 35.

is largely bare, except for several benches, vegetation increases as one moves east. A seemingly abandoned childcare center and playground exists one level below ground level, adjacent to the front eastern part of the building.

Federal Office Building No. 10 (FAA)

Two buildings – 10a and 10b – actually make up Federal Office Building (FOB) No. 10. 10a, located on the southwest corner of Independence Avenue and Seventh Street, has served since its completion as the headquarters of the Department of Transportation’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). 10b, located just across Seventh Street abutting Maryland Avenue, was built for the Offices for Manned Space Flight, Aeronautics and Space Technology, and Applications of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).⁶¹⁶ Today, the FAA occupies it entirely. Architects Holabird & Root and Carroll, Grisdale & Van Allen designed both buildings,⁶¹⁷ which have identical facades, but different sizes and shapes. Both buildings were completed in late 1963.⁶¹⁸

FOB No. 10a is located at 800 Independence Avenue. The bottom two stories of this ten-story building have a glass façade in the front lobby area – permitting views through the open interior (barring a few structural columns) to the other side of the building – and a solid marble façade on the sides. The eight floors are raised above on pilotis, creating a wide corridor on the ground level that segues into the aggregate block plaza. The façade of the upper eight stories is a mixture of marble-covered columns and beams, surrounding a sea of evenly spaced double glass windows. The effect is of a flat wall flowing from marble to glass, in the spirit of Mies van der Rohe.⁶¹⁹ The vertical blinds on the interior add to the character of the façade. The interior was designed in the 1930s federal office style whereby any agency could occupy any building. Movable partitions customize the space. In 1965, a helipad was dedicated on the building’s roof; it was closed in 1984.⁶²⁰

FOB No. 10b, located at 600 Independence Avenue, has the same general façade features as its larger sister building. It is eight stories in height, with at least two stories and a parking garage below ground. The top two stories are each stepped back from the main rectangular box of the building. The lobby of this shorter building is less monumental and does not open up views to the other side. Its front plaza is also smaller. St. Paul’s Baptist Church and the residences of Aiken Court formerly occupied this site.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁶ “NASA Installations,” *SP-4012 NASA Historical Data Book: Volume IV, NASA Resources 1969-1978*, <http://history.nasa.gov/SP-4012/vol4/ch6.htm>, accessed 13 July 2004.

⁶¹⁷ D.C. RLA, “The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area, Washington, D.C.”

⁶¹⁸ Scott & Lee, 235-236.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁶²⁰ “FAA Historical Chronology, 1926-1996,” *FAA Home Page*, 1998
<http://www.faa.gov/aboutfaa/history/b-chron.doc>, accessed 5 August 2004.

⁶²¹ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 205.

FOB No. 8 (FDA)

Federal Office Building No. 8 is located at 200 C Street, on the area bounded by Second, Third, C, and D streets. The architecture firm Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson designed the building.⁶²² Construction began in 1961 and finished in 1965.⁶²³ The building's 545,500 square feet of space originally housed laboratories of the Food and Drug Administration. With the FDA's September 2001 move to new Federal space in Maryland, various possibilities were considered for the space, including having it continue to serve as a Federal office building, incorporating it into the Capitol Complex, and redevelopment of the site as a National Health Museum.⁶²⁴ Following hearings and debate, in September 2001, the General Services Administration announced the selection of Boggs & Partners Architects with GHT Ltd. Consulting Engineers for modernization of the building into Class A office space.⁶²⁵ Today it is still occupied by the FDA.

The building has seven stories, with the top floor recessed from the building line. The façade consists of wide tan concrete columns, without any spandrels, interrupted by vertical strips of small, near-square portal windows. These windows are arranged in vertical columns, alternating with panels of brown synthetic material. The side facades consist of solid concrete. The exterior of the building lacks a plaza, and the structure sits near the sidewalk, with streets and parking spots close nearby. The absence any grand entrance makes entry confusing.

James Forrestal Building (FOB No. 5)

Among the four Federal office buildings first authorized by Congress for construction in the redeveloped Southwest, the James Forrestal Building, originally known simply as Federal Office Building No. 5, was the last to be constructed. Located at 1000 Independence Avenue, it was completed in 1969.⁶²⁶ The architectural firm Curtis & Davis designed the building. The building's original occupant was the Department of Defense. In order to improve circulation, plans were scrapped to house the department in two separate buildings lining the northernmost portion of the Tenth Street Promenade. Thus, this apparently singular structure – although technically three separate north, south, and west buildings – was built to straddle the promenade. Although this solution likely improved upon employee circulation as planned, it placed a veritable road block at the northern end of the promenade, once again barricading the Southwest from the rest of D.C. – this time, along the very entryway that was supposed to rectify that historical situation. Instead of the planned vista of the Smithsonian Castle, visitors to the

⁶²² D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area."

⁶²³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1965, 4.

⁶²⁴ Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, & Emergency Management, "Hearing on The National Health Museum and the Future Use of Federal Office Building 8," 10 May 2001, <http://www.house.gov/transportation/pbed/05-10-01/05-10-01memo.html>, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶²⁵ "GSA Selects Architect for \$70M D.C. Project," News Release, 17 October 2001, *GSA Home Page*, http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?pageTypeId=8199&channelId=-13259&P=XAE&contentId=9427&contentType=GSA_BASIC, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶²⁶ Scott & Lee, 236.

promenade now catch only a glimpse of that building above and below the concrete barrier located on Independence Avenue, between Ninth and Eleventh streets.

The building's façade consists of concrete panels with double windows covering four stories of office space. These four stories are raised on thirty-six concrete pilotis, through which automobile and pedestrian traffic can pass in the middle. When it opened, the building's 1.63 million square feet of space (of which 1.3 million square feet make up office space and corridors)⁶²⁷ housed approximately 6,500 employees.⁶²⁸ The configuration of this interior space was also notable, as its "imaginative floor plan" was "a manifestation of President John F. Kennedy's effort to improve the quality of federal government architecture."⁶²⁹ The identity of its occupants led to its nickname, "Little Pentagon." In 1977, however, the Department of Energy moved into the space and made it its headquarters.⁶³⁰

As part of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, the District Department of Transportation conducted an urban planning study of L'Enfant Promenade. One of the study's guiding principles is to "realize the monumental potential of the Promenade and its relationships to the City." In order to achieve that goal, one of the steps proposed is the removal of the obstruction to views of the Smithsonian Castle by the Forrestal Building. The study also calls the building a security concern.⁶³¹ Thus, the building may be at risk of either loss or significant alteration in the future.

Robert C. Weaver Federal Building/FOB No. 5 (HUD)

The Robert C. Weaver Federal Building, or the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Building, or FOB No. 5, is located at 451 Seventh Street, at the southwest corner of Seventh and D streets. This was the former site of a bank and the Hammersly Alley and residential community.⁶³² Architects Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard, with Nolen Swinburne Associates, designed the building.⁶³³ Small recessed horizontal glass windows punctuate the 10-story precast concrete building – the first Federal office building to be constructed of this material. Its bold, curvilinear "X" shape is a form highly reminiscent of Breuer's design for the UNESCO Headquarters and IBM Research Center, both in France. This shape was a sharp contrast to the typical boxy form employed in most existing Federal buildings – a symbolic statement about the responsibilities of the newly created HUD. Its design also

⁶²⁷ Results Center, *EUA Cogenex - U.S. DOE, Forrestal Building Lighting Retrofit Profile #100* ([Washington, D.C.]: The Results Center, 1995?), <http://sol.crest.org/efficiency/irt/100.pdf>, accessed 14 July 2004: 6.

⁶²⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 25.

⁶²⁹ Scott & Lee, 236.

⁶³⁰ Results Center, 6.

⁶³¹ Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. and HNTB Architects Engineers Planners, *Urban Planning Study: L'Enfant Promenade, for Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, District Department of Transportation* (N.p.: January 2003), [http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/frames.asp?doc=/ddot/lib/ddot/information/studies/lenfant/guidingprinciples.pdf&open=\[32399\]](http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/frames.asp?doc=/ddot/lib/ddot/information/studies/lenfant/guidingprinciples.pdf&open=[32399]), accessed 14 July 2004.

⁶³² *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 204.

⁶³³ "Robert C. Weaver Federal Building," *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Home Page*, <http://www.hud.gov/about/hqbuilding.cfm>, accessed 15 July 2004.

responded to President John F. Kennedy's efforts to improve public building design. Structurally, "the building's frame was made of a cast-in-place concrete "tree" that rested the bulk of the building on a series of stubby pilotis, or piers."⁶³⁴

As with the building, concrete also dominates the landscaping of the complex's six-acre plaza, which is built above an underground garage and once severed as an additional parking location itself. Breuer's original design lacked any trees, shade, or public amenities. In 1990, the landscape architecture firm Martha Schwartz, Inc., began redesigning the space to express HUD's mission of creating habitable spaces for people. It added thirty-foot diameter, grass-filled concrete planters (which double as seating) and white "Lifesaver-shaped" plastic canopies (which double as lighting), raised on fourteen-foot steel poles. A backlit mural is also planned.⁶³⁵ The cold, stark character of the space still remains, however.

Building construction began in November 1966 and finished in 1968. It was formally opened and dedicated on September 9, 1968. On July 11, 2000, it was renamed in honor of Secretary Robert C. Weaver, who originally dedicated the building and served as the first HUD secretary and the first African American Cabinet member.⁶³⁶

David Nassif Building (U.S. Dept. of Transportation Building)

The David Nassif Building is located at 400 Seventh Street, at the corner of Seventh and D streets. This was the former site of the Westminster Memorial Church (Presbyterian), the Fifth Baptist Church, a private garage, and various housing.⁶³⁷ Architect Edward Durrell Stone designed the building, which was developed by the David Nassif Corporation.⁶³⁸ Since the building's completion in 1969, the GSA has leased it for occupancy by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Unlike the previously discussed Federal structures, the Nassif Building is an example of a private, speculative office development whose design was tailored for a specific Federal agency, but could also function as private office space.⁶³⁹

The tall, rectangular building is hollowed out at the middle, where it contains a courtyard plaza that is accessible from the sides. This plaza contains a rectangular plot of trees and other vegetative landscaping, surrounded by a fountain and water moat. Later, an escalator entrance was added to the L'Enfant Plaza Metro station. The building's façade consists of alternating ribbons of glass windows and marble veneer, creating a striated pattern. The marble comes from the same Carrara quarry in Italy that was the source of the material that Stone used at the

⁶³⁴ Scott & Lee, 239.

⁶³⁵ "Hall of Shame: HUD Plaza," *Project for Public Spaces Home Page*, http://www.pps.org/gps/one?public_place_id=146#, accessed 15 July 2004; "Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)," *Martha Schwartz, Inc. Home Page*, <http://www.marthaschwartz.com/prjts/civic/HUD/hud.html>, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶³⁶ "HUD Headquarters Building Renamed to Honor Robert C. Weaver – First HUD Secretary and First African American Cabinet Member," Press Release, 11 July 2000, *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Home Page*, <http://www.hud.gov/library/bookshelf18/pressrel/pr00-161.html>, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶³⁷ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 204.

⁶³⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 3, 5.

⁶³⁹ Scott & Lee, 240.

Kennedy Center. Both buildings also share broad overhanging eaves.⁶⁴⁰ Inside, the building contains more than 1.7 million square feet of space.⁶⁴¹ In its 1967 annual report, the RLA called the Nassif Building the “largest private office building in the Washington Metropolitan Area.”⁶⁴²

In February 2004, construction began on a new Department of Transportation headquarters building in Southeast Washington, D.C. Employees are expected to move from the Nassif Building to this new site in 2006.⁶⁴³

Reporters Building (USDA)

The Reporters Building is located at 300 Seventh Street, on the northwest corner of Seventh and D streets. Architect Vosbeck, Ward and Associates, of Alexandria, Virginia, designed the building, which was developed by Robert Associates, of Washington, D.C. Construction began on the 141,000 square foot building in summer 1964.⁶⁴⁴ Having once served as an expansion site for NASA administration, today it is fully leased to the GSA and includes offices for Coastal America and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Procurement and Property Management.

The concrete building combines two rectangular forms in a T-shaped plan. It is nine stories high, with the ninth floor being a recessed utility level. The façade is covered in rough, tan, stone aggregate, while the bottom floor is encased in glass and contains some commercial space. Pilotis lift the upper floors above the ground level. Rectangular windows punctuate a grid of wide, aggregate-covered concrete spandrels and columns. Vertical dividers break up the entire façade, including the window spans, in an even cadence. Brick covers the majority of the backside of the building – a likely renovation.

Hubert H. Humphrey Building (Health and Human Services)

In 1976, construction completed on the Hubert H. Humphrey Building for the Department of Health and Human Services, located at 200 Independence Avenue. This plot had been ear-marked during redevelopment as a site for the construction of a Federal office building. Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard were the architects.⁶⁴⁵ In materials, façade treatment (including the small, recessed windows), and landscaping, it resembles Breuer’s other Southwest structure, the HUD building.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ “Nassif Building,” *Smith Commercial Realty Home Page*, http://www.smithcommercialrealty.com/smith_tenants/property_details.cfm?location=2&building_number=321&pgst=1, accessed 23 July 2004.

⁶⁴² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 3.

⁶⁴³ “Contractors Move Forward on Transportation Building,” *Washington Business Journal*, 13 February 2004, <http://washington.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2004/02/16/focus9.html>, accessed 23 July 2004.

⁶⁴⁴ “300 7th St SW,” *Charles E. Smith Commercial Realty Home Page*, <http://costarconnect.com/costarconnect/GenericFrame.asp?CostarPage=Main.asp&SiteID=20482&Checksum=12883&Demo=0&RtnURL=www.smithcommercialrealty.com/available/>, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶⁴⁵ Scott & Lee, 234.

Transportation

Former Conditions

The old Southwest contained a grid of numerous residential streets, as well as several major thoroughfares. These major streets, noted for their wide pavement widths, included South Capitol, Fourth, Seventh, Tenth, Eleventh, and M streets, and Maine Avenue. Several modes of transportation traversed these routes, including the streetcar line on Seventh Street and the southern portion of Maine Avenue; and the Eleventh, Fourth, and M Street bus routes. In reference to public transit accessibility, the NCPC wrote of the old Southwest, “All parts of the Survey Area are within walking distance of a transit route.”⁶⁴⁶

Although not a transportation route in and out of Southwest, The Pennsylvania Railroad tracks arched through the area and acted as a northern border. The tracks run northeast along Maryland Avenue up to C Street and then southeast from C Street along Virginia Avenue.

Structures of the New Southwest

As already discussed, urban renewal replaced much of the old Southwest’s street grid pattern with superblocks. However, many of the old major routes – such as Seventh Street, M Street, and Maine Avenue – remained. While others also continued to exist, they were sometimes altered. For example, Fourth Street was interrupted by Town Center, and Maine Avenue was truncated at Sixth Street, rather than continuing further south. In addition, although there was wide support for a bill to place the railroad tracks in a tunnel between Union Station and Virginia, that plan died due to its high \$75 million price tag.⁶⁴⁷ Thus, urban renewal built around the railroad tracks and tried as much as possible to eliminate their influence as a barrier. Of the new construction, one major roadway, the Southwest Expressway, was the key element in Southwest urban renewal’s impact on the area’s transportation network.

Southwest Expressway

As far as shaping the future of Southwest, the area’s own existing internal transportation routes were less significant than the perceived future transportation needs of the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. As many American cities at that time were experiencing decentralization, highways were viewed as a means for returning the population to the cities – to work, shop, and live. In addition, a 1950 report by the Washington Metropolitan Chapter of the American Institute of Architects further endorsed the use of highways as borders between varied land use patterns, diverting high-speed traffic from pedestrian-oriented areas and separating residential from second commercial without relegating either to areas outside the city.⁶⁴⁸

A 1955 highway proposal by the Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. highway departments describes a 450-mile expressway system for the region, including a 17.6-mile inner loop

⁶⁴⁶ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 5.

⁶⁴⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 10.

⁶⁴⁸ Gillette, 157.

roadway that was to circulate within the center of Washington, D.C. This proposal built upon the suggestion for such a roadway in the 1950 Comprehensive Plan, which itself was preceded by Harland Bartholomew's introduction of an inner loop highway into a January 1944 Interregional Highway Committee report.⁶⁴⁹ As public outcry against the displacement of highway construction halted completion of the inner roadway, only the first two of its original five segments were actually built – the Southwest and Southeast legs. Today these form the Southwest/Southeast Freeway.⁶⁵⁰ Construction began on the expressway in fiscal year 1958.⁶⁵¹

Urban renewal in Southwest responded to the proposal for the Southwest Expressway, adapting its own plans to appropriately assimilate the expressway with the aims of redevelopment. The finished roadway would permit high-speed traffic to bypass the Southwest and also enable Southwest residents to access the rest of the city and metropolitan area. In addition, it serves as a visual barrier between the commercial and residential areas of the neighborhood, without acting as an impenetrable barrier to further isolate the quadrant as previous transportation routes had done.⁶⁵²

From end to end, the multi-lane expressway links the Fourteenth Street Bridge and South Capitol Street. On the east, at Maine Avenue, a tunnel diverts local traffic under the Expressway. Near the Tenth Street Promenade, it runs closer to grade and is crossed via overpasses. At its eastern end, it is a raised roadway, permitting local traffic to cross into Southwest through underpasses. In a broader context, the expressway was originally intended to serve as part of Interstate 95. When it was decided that I-95 would not pass through the city, it was designated as part of the spur Interstate 395.

Washington Channel Bridge

In addition to the Expressway, the Washington Channel Bridge (located just outside the renewal area boundaries, but intricately connected with it) was another significant transportation project completed during Southwest's urban renewal. The bridge was designed by the engineers Sverdrup and Parcel, Inc. and Gannett, Fleming, Corddry, and Carpenter, Inc., as well as by the D.C. Department of Highways and Traffic.⁶⁵³ Completed in 1963, with opening ceremonies held on July 31, 1962,⁶⁵⁴ today it carries I-395 traffic between East Potomac Park and the Southwest Expressway.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁰ District of Columbia. Department of Transportation, *The South Capitol Gateway and Corridor Improvement Study; Final Report* (N.p.: 4 November 2003), <http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view,a,1247,q,560731.asp>, accessed 16 July 2004; "Inner Loop," *Takoma Park Highway Design Studio Home Page*, http://www.highwaysandcommunities.com/1955-77_Inner_Loop.html, accessed 16 July 2004.

⁶⁵¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 2.

⁶⁵² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 24.

⁶⁵³ "Program for the Opening Ceremonies of the Washington Channel Bridge & Twelfth Street Expressway, Washington, D.C.," pamphlet, 31 July 1962, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers.

⁶⁵⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 19.

While the constructed bridge is a major automobile route, it was originally envisioned in Chloethiel Woodard Smith's waterfront plan as a more commercial and pedestrian-oriented element. In her plan, an 874'-40' bridge would connect the Southwest with East Potomac Park, and its length would be lined with 90,000 square feet of restaurants and shops.⁶⁵⁵ She evoked the imagery of Florence's Ponte Vecchio as a standard-setter.⁶⁵⁶ Although the NCPC approved the concept of a pedestrian bridge linking the Tenth Street Mall, waterfront, and East Potomac Park (with its proposed National Aquarium) in December 1954,⁶⁵⁷ and Congress approved it in 1966,⁶⁵⁸ the realization of that vision never materialized.

IV. Relocation

Although the early planners of Southwest's urban renewal had intended for many of the area's former residents to be able to return once the slums had been eradicated and more sanitary structures and sites built in their place, this aspiration went largely unfulfilled. Thus, the second responsibility of the RLA – relocation of families and businesses – took on very significant long-term ramifications.

Relocating Residents

Process

Before the D.C. Commissioners would approve a redevelopment plan, they required an understanding that adequate facilities existed for the rehousing of the current inhabitants of the redevelopment area. Thus, relocation was a key step for the RLA. On a more personal level, it was even more significant for the approximately 23,000 former residents of Southwest. Many had lived their entire lives in the area – growing up in the neighborhood, and possibly working there, or somewhere nearby, as well. Thanks to urban renewal, many would be separated from friends and sent to corners of the city that they may not have ever previously visited. Thus, the emotional and social scars were significant. On the flip side, however, in finding suitable housing for the relocated families, the RLA oftentimes provided the residents with a significant improvement over their former physical conditions.

The process of relocating families proceeded in several specific steps. Once the bounds of the urban renewal area were set, the relocation staff began its work by conducting a door-to-door survey. Through the survey, the interviewer, or relocation technician, estimated the relocation needs of each resident family, explained the purpose of urban renewal, estimated and communicated key relocation dates for the family, and left each family with an informational

⁶⁵⁵ *Two on Two at the Octagon*, 7.

⁶⁵⁶ DC RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 21.

⁶⁵⁷ U.S. NCPC, *The Urban River; A Staff Proposal for Waterfront Development in the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office (for sale by the Supt. of Docs.), 1972), 42.

⁶⁵⁸ *Two on Two at the Octagon*, 8.

pamphlet. Community meetings held by other staff members further supplemented the information provided in these pamphlets.

The second official contact occurred once a property had been acquired, at which point the relocation technician sent the family notification by mail and referred them to the field office, where family counselors were available to assist them. The family counselors provided public housing applications and private housing listings, depending upon a family's income, and served as a concerned real estate agent to the family.⁶⁵⁹

After property acquisition, but before relocation, the resident was a tenant to the RLA. During this period, relocation technicians showed the family potential dwellings. Although they were only required to show each family one viable option, technicians were often said to have exceeded that minimum.⁶⁶⁰ Once a new home was selected, the RLA inspected the prospective residence to ensure that it was suitable for the family. The factors contributing to suitability included its being structurally sound, large enough for the family's size, and equipped with basic amenities (hot and cold running water, electricity, an inside bathroom, a kitchen sink, and central heating).⁶⁶¹ In addition, two other requirements that were assessed included whether or not it was conveniently distanced from the bread-winner's place of work, and whether its price was within the family's ability to pay.⁶⁶² Once the dwelling passed its inspection, the family received \$200 to cover moving expenses.⁶⁶³

The RLA described its ultimate goal as much more than just the completion of relocated families' moves. Rather, it sought "to effect successful relocation, to imbue families with the desire to improve by providing every aid possible, in effect, to approach relocation as a human problem as well as a problem of shelter."⁶⁶⁴ Toward this larger end, family counselors were known to assist in obtaining inexpensive or free furnishings for families' new homes, discounted medical services for ailing family members, and even hasty marriage licenses for couples who had been living together for a long time, but would not be recognized in their new home as having a civil union.⁶⁶⁵

Throughout the various stages of this process, eviction was always viewed as a last resort – reserved for cases when a family "refused to pay rent for quarters used or to accept suitable alternate accommodations." In the end, the RLA prided itself on the fact that not a single Southwest family was evicted its their home.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁵⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 14.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 13.

⁶⁶³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 15.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁶⁵ James Banks, Group Interview by author, River Park, SW, Washington, D.C., June 24, 2004.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Project Area B

In January 1953, the RLA opened its first relocation field office. Situated on Fourth Street, the location demonstrated the RLA's desire to provide residents with easy access to their services.⁶⁶⁷ In the course of their first assignment – Project Area B – the RLA relocated 1,041 families. When the RLA conducted a door-to-door survey of the area prior to commencing relocation, however, they counted 1260 families. Moreover, original estimates of the area's population at the start of urban renewal planning identified 1,345 families in what would become Project Area B. This total decrease of 304 families was due to individual families' decisions to move out on their own when they heard about the upcoming relocation, despite the recommendation by the RLA that they await assistance before leaving the area.⁶⁶⁸

Relocation actually commenced in December 1953.⁶⁶⁹ Upon completion, the 1,041 families had been distributed as follows: 441 in public housing, 515 in private housing, 47 in substandard private housing – to which the families had voluntarily moved – and 38 unaccounted for. This issue of “lost” families would recur in other project areas, leading many to recommend that the various organizations involved in the relocation process pool their efforts in order to work more effectively and comprehensively for all families' benefits.

Project Areas C and C-1

Project Area C, with 4,114 families, was a much more sizeable undertaking. By the start of the area's relocation activities, several advances had been made in order to somewhat ease the process. First, in fiscal year 1958, the NCHA instituted a new policy whereby displaced Southwest families were given priority in dwindling public housing facilities.⁶⁷⁰ In addition, new public housing was in development at that time in near Southeast and eastern Southwest.⁶⁷¹ Second, more than 100 Washington real estate agencies began listing private housing vacancies with the RLA, supplementing the other side of the housing supply.⁶⁷²

When the inhabitants of Project Area C were relocated, approximately 50 percent were slated for public housing and 50 percent for private housing. The same was true for Project Area C-1.⁶⁷³

Project Area C also became the site of “Southwest Center”, a 2-year experimental ‘pilot’ study in ‘human renewal’ designed to define and test the best procedures and techniques that could be used in solving relocation problems in urban renewal areas.”⁶⁷⁴ The staff of the demonstration project, which was undertaken under Section 314 of the Housing Act of 1954,

⁶⁶⁷ D.C. RLA, *This is RLA*, 4.

⁶⁶⁸ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix D-1.

⁶⁶⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1955, 14.

⁶⁷⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 10.

⁶⁷¹ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix D-3.

⁶⁷² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 10.

⁶⁷³ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix D-2 - D-3.

⁶⁷⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 10.

began its work in 1958.⁶⁷⁵ Through group education and coordinated social services, the staff hoped to teach families how to adjust to new communities as well as how to perform basic self-help tasks, such as housekeeping, sewing, and home decoration.⁶⁷⁶ The test group for this study included 198 “demonstration” families and another 198 control group families.⁶⁷⁷

At the conclusion of the project, shortly after the completion of relocation, it was very difficult to measure the success or failure of the effort. Staff members felt that the demonstration project “was of very definite though modest value to most of the families participating,”⁶⁷⁸ but interviews of control and demonstration families showed little difference between the two groups. Some degree of success could perhaps be inferred from the fact that more demonstration families (61 percent versus 49 percent) voluntarily opted for public housing over private housing – the former being considered by staff members as a more safe and sanitary option.⁶⁷⁹ Otherwise, however, differences were hard to measure.

Following the demonstration project, the RLA established a similar program of community education and organization in a Northeast renewal area.⁶⁸⁰ Without concrete results either way, they were willing to at least try the program again in the event that it proved useful. More statistically concrete learnings from Southwest relocation experiences would not be illuminated, however, until another study was conducted by Daniel Thursz and the HEW five years later.

Where They Went

By mid-1960, of the 4,664 families that resided in Southwest when acquisition began, 98 percent had been relocated. Their new residences were distributed as follows:⁶⁸¹

Northwest:	14.9%
Northeast:	21.4%
Southeast:	42.7%
Southwest:	13.2%
Outside Washington, D.C.:	6.0%
Unknown:	1.8%

The ninety-five families that had yet to be relocated typically had social or economic “handicaps” that made relocation particularly difficult. Three such handicapped groups included those who were economically eligible for public housing, but whose families were too large for the ten-person maximum public housing units; families that earned too much money to be

⁶⁷⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1957, 6; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 24.

⁶⁷⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 24.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁷⁸ D.C. RLA, *Community Services and Family Relocation; The Report of a Demonstration Project Carried Out Under the Provisions of the Housing Act of 1954* ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., 1964), 13-14.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 134-135.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁸¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 16.

eligible for public housing, but were too poor to be able to afford private housing; and, low-income elderly people, for whom public housing was in short supply.⁶⁸²

In 1966, the Health and Welfare Council (HWC), Washington, D.C.'s social welfare planning and coordinating body, published a follow-up study on a portion of the families in Project Area C that were relocated through the demonstration project. One of the topics the study tracked was the current location of ninety-six of these families, five years after displacement. Although this group was not entirely representative of the entire relocated population of the old Southwest, the study is still instructive.

Like the earlier figures, this study found that the families were not clustered in several locations outside, but near, Southwest. Rather, it compared the displaced families to "leaves on an autumn day," living in a total of thirty-seven different census tracts.⁶⁸³ Approximately 25 percent were living in the Southwest, predominantly in public housing; 42 percent resided in disparate portions of Southeast; 19 percent lived in 11 census tracts in Northeast, and 8 percent resided in non-adjointing census tracts in Northwest. Among these families, 64 percent were still living in their original relocation residence, and 21 percent had moved once since then.⁶⁸⁴

Assessments

There have been several formal and informal evaluations of Southwest's urban renewal resident relocation process. The newspapers at the time were full of articles voicing both support and opposition to the urban renewal process and procedures. Ezekia Cunningham, an 84-year old black owner and proprietor of a small grocery store located at Third and G streets aptly described the mixture of emotions being felt at the time when he commented, "Well, it seems like they're handin' out a passel o' joy and a passel o' sorrow."⁶⁸⁵

A notable thread among many of the evaluations of relocation was a common approval for the work and intentions of James Banks and his RLA relocation staff. They were inexperienced in this area and would set the standards for many future relocation staffs around the country. However, despite the best of intentions, their inexperience did result in some grievances and difficulties.

For example, when Mary Cavanaugh, Director of Southwest's Vincent House, testified at an urban renewal hearing in 1960, she began her comments by absolving Banks and his staff of blame:

I wish to make it clear that I feel that no blame should be attached to Mr. James Banks, of RLA, or to most of those under him as far as I know them, for any part of this tragic situation. I believe that most of the injustice and misery has been caused by defects and

⁶⁸² Ibid.

⁶⁸³ Thursz, 25-26

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 26-27.

⁶⁸⁵ George Beveridge, "Southwest Area Takes on Ghost Town Look," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 21 November 1954.

inadequacies of the original law which failed to make proper provision for or provide adequate compensation for the various types or classes of persons to be displaced and for their proper relocation.⁶⁸⁶

She then went on to enumerate numerous proposed improvements to the relocation process, including recommendations to “handle cases in a more humane way;” provide appropriate rehousing for the elderly, middle class, and single women; and permit pets to accompany residents moving to row or walk-up public housing projects.⁶⁸⁷

In addition to ad hoc civic group input, several individuals conducted and published detailed studies of the relocation in Southwest. One of the earliest among these was Robert G. Howes’ 1959 report *Crisis Downtown: A Church Eye-view of Urban Renewal*. Published several years later, and much more widely known, was Daniel Thursz’ 1966 study *Where Are They Now?* The methods and findings of both are described briefly below.

Crisis Downtown

In 1959, firmly in the midst of Southwest’s urban renewal process, Robert G. Howe published *Crisis Downtown: A Church Eye-view of Urban Renewal*, a brief history of the Southwest’s redevelopment to-date that focused in detail on its relocation policies. Howe’s perspectives were fueled by his dual positions as a Worcester, MA, Roman Catholic priest, as well as a graduate student studying city planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Between November 1958 and August 1959, Howe interviewed 202 families that had formerly resided in Project Area C. His subjects volunteered to participate, and they were disproportionately skewed toward public housing residents.⁶⁸⁸

Based on his research, Howe concluded that urban renewal was an excellent idea for the area and that the RLA’s relocation procedures were generally successful. Interviewees often described relocation as expeditious and gentle,⁶⁸⁹ and many families “bettered their lot physically.” In addition, a large majority viewed their new residential location as a better place in which to bring up children than the Southwest.⁶⁹⁰

On the flip side, however, Howes concluded that bureaucratic double-talk and an overabundance of “cooks in the broth” may have contributed to a variety of human inconveniences and their resultant gripes. These grievances surrounded the “dictatorial” land condemnation and assessment practices, the misrepresentation of residents’ possibility of

⁶⁸⁶ “Hearing on HR 8697,” 12 May 1960, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, 1.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Howes, 26.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 27.

returning to the area, the “losing” of families in the bookkeeping, and the absence of a central relocation agency.⁶⁹¹

Where Are They Now?

Daniel Thursz’ study, *Where Are They Now? A Study of the Impact of Relocation on Former Residents of Southwest Washington, Who Were Served in an HWC Demonstration Project*, was somewhat larger and better known than that of Howes. With the help of the HWC, Thursz attempted to follow up with the 198 demonstration families, five years after relocation, in order to reassess their conditions and opinions from a more distanced perspective. Thursz and his staff were successful in interviewing a representative sample of ninety-eight of the original families. Their findings, as a result of these interviews, were both encouraging and surprising.

In terms of physical housing alone, the study debunked the hypothesis that relocated former slum residents either seek out or recreate slum conditions in their new location. On the contrary, Thursz’s findings led him to the conclusion that, “If one measures the impact of relocation solely in terms of physical rehabilitation, the urban renewal program is a huge success.” Prior to relocation, only 22.2 percent of families lived in “good” conditions, and 26.4 percent lived in accommodations that needed only minor repairs. In contrast, five years later, 85.7 percent of families lived in “good” accommodations, and the entire remainder only needed minor repairs.⁶⁹² In addition, conditions were significantly more orderly and clean in the new accommodations.⁶⁹³

The numbers behind these improvements are even more telling. At the time of the survey, 96.9 percent of the families now had flush toilets in their dwellings (versus 43 percent in 1950), 93.7 percent had central heating (versus more than 70 percent in 1950), and nearly 96 percent had bathrooms with running water (versus more than 44 percent in 1950). Perhaps the greatest improvement, however, was seen in the area of electricity. In 1950, only 20% of these families enjoyed this utility. By the time of the survey, though, 100 percent had electricity, and 82 percent even owned televisions!⁶⁹⁴

As Thursz then went on to note, “It would be an error, however, to assume that the improvement in housing creates automatically the conditions by which other problems associated with slum living disappear.”⁶⁹⁵ Thus, while housing had improved, residents’ social and attitudinal health had often stagnated or even declined.

Thursz found that the families he surveyed experienced a serious drop in their use of community services,⁶⁹⁶ and almost 40 percent (versus 52 percent prior) were out of work.⁶⁹⁷ One

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., 12-14.

⁶⁹² Thursz, 28.

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 32-34.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 46.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid., 48.

of the most surprising findings of all was the fact that, after five years in their new homes, more than a quarter of the residents had not made a single friend in that neighborhood.⁶⁹⁸ As a result of – or perhaps even as a cause of – these conditions, these families also experienced a high degree of hopelessness and social dysfunction.⁶⁹⁹ Moreover, although half of the families preferred their new homes to their old ones, fewer than 30 percent were happy that they had to move.⁷⁰⁰

Based on this information, Thursz concluded that there was still significant room for improvement in urban renewal relocation programs. Thus, he made several recommendations. First, he argued that residents should be more deeply involved in the relocation process and, if possible, they should move into new homes on the site of their former residences. Second, he argued that relocation activities should extend to the post-relocation phase as well, during which social agencies and community agents must play a larger role in integrating the newly relocated families. Third, he recommended additional research on relocation, including studies specifically focused on the role of community identification in either helping or hindering the overall process.⁷⁰¹

Relocating Businesses

Process

Given the unique needs of each firm, the process for relocating businesses was much less standardized than that employed with residents. In fact, most businesses worked directly with the private real estate market to resolve their individual situations. For its part, the RLA served as a middleman, funneling questionnaires between the displaced businesses and the Washington Real Estate Board.⁷⁰² In addition, the RLA administered a financial aid program that offered funds to cover financial property losses and moving expenses. The limit for these funds was originally set by the Housing Act of 1956 at \$2,000 per business, although that amount increased to \$3,000 in 1959.⁷⁰³

Where They Went

By mid-1960, of Southwest's 768 businesses, 453 (59 percent) were relocated, 115 (15 percent) remained, and 200 (26 percent) went out of business. Of the relocated businesses, approximately 75 percent filed financial claims with the RLA that were within the allowable range.⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 54.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 71-72.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 57.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 105-107.

⁷⁰² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 21.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

More than 95 percent of the relocated businesses were originally based in Project Areas C or C-1. Of that group, the following table summarizes their post-renewal location:⁷⁰⁵

Northwest:	27.7%
Northeast:	23.8%
Southeast:	16.9%
Southwest:	10.8%
Outside Washington, D.C.:	20.8%

Assessments

In his broad study of urban renewal in the United States, Martin Anderson concludes, “Extremely few relocated firms ever move back into the urban renewal areas.” He notes that, even though displaced businesses typically receive priority in relocating in the renewed areas, high post-renewal costs, in contrast to previously depressed rents, serve as a key impediment to taking advantage of that opportunity. As the livelihood of many businesses depended upon a local customer base, either relocation or the process of moving back into the old area could also be very risky. Statistically, Anderson found that 25 percent of displaced businesses went out of businesses, and only 4 percent (of a very small sample of four cities) moved back into the urban renewal area.⁷⁰⁶

In Southwest, the story was fairly consistent with these trends, with very few businesses returning to the area after redevelopment had occurred.⁷⁰⁷ The major exceptions to this trend were the members of the wholesale market, who organized themselves into the Southwest Market Center, Inc.; the Bernsteins, who opened a small shopping center near South Capitol Street; and some seafood restaurants and vendors, who received new facilities on a renewed waterfront.

Southwest’s liquor store owners faced a particularly unique and dismal plight. The old Southwest was home to twenty-two liquor stores, and the law required that they turn in their liquor license if they ever closed down operations. Upon reopening, the license could subsequently be picked up. However, if this was not done by the end of the license year (Feb 1) when the license had been surrendered, the license would be lost. This situation was further aggravated by the fact that, in 1936, the District had limited liquor licenses to 300, grandfathering in the one hundred licenses that then existed in excess of the limit. At the time of urban renewal, there were still more than eighty licenses in excess of the limit, thus making it impossible for displaced owners to obtain a new license if they wished to reopen in Southwest, or if it took them more than a few months to reestablish their business in a new location.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁶ Anderson, 69-70.

⁷⁰⁷ Melder, *City of Magnificent Intentions*, 524.

⁷⁰⁸ Hector McLean, “Liquor Dealers, Though Blameless, Face Loss of License in Southwest,” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 6 March 1955.

In contrast to this unusual legal situation, the difficulties of the former businesses of the waterfront were more representative of the typical difficulties facing businesses wishing to return to urban renewal areas. In 1964, several prospective commercial tenants brought to the attention of the House of Representatives their concerns that there was a near-conspiracy by the RLA to keep them from relocating on the waterfront.⁷⁰⁹ The D.C. Redevelopment Act stipulated that former tenants of the waterfront would be given a priority six-month period in which to negotiate for relocation.⁷¹⁰ However, most tenants felt unable to take advantage of this opportunity given the high rent prices – which were based upon unverified land valuations – and the RLA’s requirement that they build significant and expensive covered parking facilities for non-individual use.⁷¹¹ Negotiations on this front kept some former waterfront tenants out of business for more than five years until agreeable compromise conditions were reached.

V. Post-Urban Renewal Buildings and Plans

Construction and planning did not cease with the completion of Southwest’s urban renewal. The redevelopment plan was in effect for forty years, after which time its restrictions no longer influenced construction in the area. Both before and after that time, and continuing through the present, numerous plans and projects have been envisioned and, at times, realized.

New Buildings

Some of the buildings that have been completed or are still in progress have filled in the land that remained undeveloped by the end of the bulk of the urban renewal development, and other projects redeveloped or renovated previously completed urban renewal buildings and sites. This section of the report will briefly identify some of the most significant of these buildings.

Aerospace Building

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s Aerospace Building was completed at 370 L’Enfant Promenade/901 D Street in 1987. Jacquelin T. Robertson was the architect in charge of this Cooper, Robertson + Partners project.⁷¹² The Southwest Bus Terminal was previously constructed on this site during urban renewal. The GSA leases this entire ten-story, 205,102 square foot building today.⁷¹³ Occupants include NASA and the Department of Health and Human Services.

⁷⁰⁹ John R. Immer, “Statement of John R. Immer, President of the Federation of Citizens Associations of the District of Columbia,” in United States. Congress. House. Committee on the District of Columbia, 2292.

⁷¹⁰ “Washington Channel Waterfront,” in United States. Congress. House. Committee on the District of Columbia, 2427.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2452, 2458.

⁷¹² Weeks, 276.

⁷¹³ “General Services Administration (GSA) Inventory of Owned and Leased Properties.”

The Portals

The Portals is an ongoing mixed-use project located on a site in the northeast corner of the Southwest urban renewal area, between Fourteenth, Twelfth, and D streets and Maine Avenue. Encompassing six buildings, built over multiple phases, project completion is expected in 2010. To date, four buildings have been completed, including three office towers by architect Arthur Cotton Moore and the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, designed by Brennan Beer Gorman Monk Architects.⁷¹⁴ Occupants of the office buildings include both government and private groups. The project's developer, Republic Properties Corporation, calls the Portals "the last major urban renewal project to be constructed on sites in southwest Washington, D.C." Other groups involved in this public-private partnership include The Commission of Fine Arts, the NCPA, and the D.C. City Council.⁷¹⁵

This site was termed the Portal Site during redevelopment because it offers the first close-up glimpse of Washington as a visitor approaches from the south.⁷¹⁶ Its large area and prominent location made it particularly important to redevelopment planning. Although proposals were received in 1981 for mixed-use development of the site, construction stalled during the 1990s. When the site is completed, it will mark the completion of the largest parcel that remained from Southwest's urban renewal.⁷¹⁷

Capital Square Townhomes

Capital Square Townhomes, located at Ninth and G streets, is the most recently completed residential development in Southwest. Although the three-four story structures are somewhat similar in scale to their easterly neighbors, the townhouses of Town Square, their suburban appearance represents a stark contrast to the aesthetics of its neighbors. Also unlike its neighbors, the complex lacks any high-rise component, and it substitutes parking spaces for central, shared residential squares.

The site on which the townhouses are located – Parcel seventy-six – was originally intended as the location for a rebuilt parish school for nearby St. Dominic's R.C. Church. In 1972, when the church determined that its parish demographics could no longer support a school, it relinquished the site, and the RLA recommended that it be used instead for the construction of low-income housing.⁷¹⁸ Although the City Council approved this modification, nearby residents opposed this new construction and pursued legal action that stalled progress for years. During this time, the site served as a parking lot for employees of the nearby Federal buildings. When

⁷¹⁴ Benjamin Forgey, "Mandarin Hotel Steps Into the Past," *Washington Post*, 15 May 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A28440-2004May14.html>.

⁷¹⁵ "The Portals," *Republic Properties Corporation Home Page*, http://www.republicpropertiescorp.com/the_portals.htm, accessed 27 July 2004.

⁷¹⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 24.

⁷¹⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1981, 20.

⁷¹⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 10.

the urban renewal plan's time frame finally ended, in 2000, plans were made to pursue these luxury townhomes instead.⁷¹⁹

The Residences at Potomac Place

The Residences at Potomac Place is a major ongoing residential construction project. These two high-rise buildings, to be located at 350 G Street and 355 Eye Street, are infill development to the Capitol Park complex.⁷²⁰ Considerable resident opposition erupted in response to developers' plans to erect these buildings in place of the previously existing landscaped open space between Potomac Place (Capitol Park Apartments) and the townhouses. This space had been a key feature of architect Chloethiel Woodard Smith's and landscape architect Dan Urban Kiley's designs for the community. Although local activists succeeded in landmarking Potomac Place, this designation did not halt the new construction that was already in progress.

Other New Buildings

Potomac Center is another project under development west of L'Enfant Plaza. This two-building office complex is located at 500 and 550 Twelfth Street. The south building has already been completed, and HUD and the Department of Education occupy it. This complex replaced the 500 Twelfth Street Building that was built there during urban renewal.

In the central area of Southwest, north of the railroad tracks, several commercial buildings have gone up. The Capitol Gallery Complex, at 600 Maryland Avenue, today houses the American Nurses Association, among other organizations. This site was formerly a transportation square. Federal Center Plaza, located at 500 C Street, and Federal Center II, located at 400 C Street, today house the U.S. Department of Homeland Security offices as well as the Holiday Inn Capitol. The pre-renewal District Grocery Stores formerly occupied this spot.⁷²¹

The Washington Design Center is located further south along the railroad tracks, at 300 D Street. Built in 1919 as a refrigerated warehouse, it was converted in 1983 by Keyes Condon Florance into space for an interior furnishings marketplace. In addition to the original brick structure, the architects appended a glass-sheathed addition.⁷²²

Patriot's Plaza is located across the train tracks from the Washington Design Center, at 395 E Street. This commercial office building is currently under construction, with an opening planned for early 2005. Another high-rise building is also under construction to the east of

⁷¹⁹ Moran, 53.

⁷²⁰ *The Residences at Potomac Place Home Page*, <http://www.potomacplacecondo.com>, accessed 6 August 2004.

⁷²¹ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 205.

⁷²² Weeks, 277; *Washington Design Center Home Page*, <http://www.mmart.com/dcdesigncenter/overview.html>, accessed 27 July 2004.

Patriot's Plaza. These two buildings, plus any construction in between will fill the previously vacant plot bounded by Fourth, Third, and E streets and the railroad tracks.

As previously discussed, much of the commercial construction that was erected during urban renewal in the triangle between Seventh Avenue, F Street and the railroad tracks has now been replaced. Some of the major new construction includes the office of the U.S. Social Security Administration and U.S. International Trade Commission at 500 E Street, One and Two Independence Square on E Street, and the office building at 400 Virginia Avenue.

South of the railroad tracks, the U.S. Department of Agriculture occupies the Waterfront Center, which was completed in 1986 at 800 Ninth Street, on the corner of Ninth Street and Maine Avenue.⁷²³ This site was vacant prior to the building's construction. The GSA currently leases this building from Guardian Realty Investors.

New Plans

Most of the current plans for Southwest aim to correct the unsuccessful aspects of South West urban renewal, which generally encompasses the three major commercial project's in the Zeckendorf Plan: the waterfront, the Town Center/Waterside Mall, and L'Enfant Plaza and Promenade. The fourth of the current plans for Southwest focuses on a largely ignored portion of the urban renewal area – South Capitol Street. Between these four potential projects, the District and private developers have visions of yet another grand redesign of Southwest.

Waterfront

Anacostia Waterfront Initiative

The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative is a massive development plan focused on revitalizing the coastal and near-coastal areas of Southwest, Southeast, and Northeast Washington, D.C., bordering on the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. In 1999, the Southwest was identified as one of the target areas of the initiative.⁷²⁴ In October 2002, with the help of the National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC) and the D.C. Office of Planning, a development plan was approved,⁷²⁵ and implementation is on-going.

In the Southwest, the RLA Revitalization Corporation, the NCRC, and the District own most of the waterfront property, creating a unique opportunity for enabling this redevelopment.

⁷²³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1986, 10.

⁷²⁴ Hamilton, Rabinovitz & Alschuler, Inc., Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP, Greenberg Consultants, Inc., *Development Plan & AWI Vision for The Southwest Waterfront: Draft. Prepared for National Capital Revitalization Corporation, District of Columbia Office of Planning, Anthony A. Williams, Mayor* ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., 6 February 2003), http://www.ncrcdc.com/docs/sw_waterfront_planning_report/report-chpt2.pdf, accessed 27 July 2004, 1-1.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-7.

Planners have identified several issues along the Southwest waterfront. First, despite the efforts of urban renewal, the area is still cut off from the rest of the city by the Southwest Expressway, and Water Street and the lack of a connection with L'Enfant Plaza further separate it from the rest of the quadrant. Second, the abundance of pavement and hard surfaces currently in the area creates adverse environmental conditions, such as a lack of drainage, shade, and vegetation. Finally, the abundance of traffic along Maine Avenue and Water Street creates a congested, polluted, and potentially dangerous environment along the waterfront.⁷²⁶

The AWI seeks to remedy these issues and create a new “face on the water” in Southwest for the use of tourists and residents alike through the pursuit of five themes: a clean and active river, eliminating barriers and gaining access, a great urban riverfront park system, cultural destinations of distinct character, and building strong waterfront neighborhoods.⁷²⁷

The plan suggests that meeting these themes will require several key physical changes to the waterfront, significantly altering the character established there by urban renewal several decades ago. In terms of alterations to the urban renewal plan, the most significant of these proposed changes include the following: eliminate Water Street; make Maine Avenue more pedestrian-friendly; widen the Waterfront Promenade as a pedestrian route; create two key squares along the promenade – an urban and commercial Market Square at the north, and a green Civic Park at the south; develop six 6-12 story mixed used structures along the waterfront, incorporating 770-825 residential units, a hotel, 317,000 square feet of retail and office space, and 200,000 square feet for cultural/community functions; and, move parking inside and below the proposed buildings.⁷²⁸

If realized, this plan would dramatically alter the waterfront's current sleepy character. It would likely result in the loss of several of the existing waterfront parks, the modification or demolition of the existing low-rise structures, the re-organization and reconstruction of existing piers, and the elimination of unimpeded channel views from nearby housing.

Earlier Proposals

This dramatic plan is just one in a progression of post-renewal proposals for revitalizing the waterfront. In 1982, for example, the Waterfront Task Force of the private, non-profit organization, the Federal City Council, developed its own recommendations for taking better advantage of Washington, D.C.'s waterfront. Like those that would follow it, the FCC's report criticized the barrier-like Water Street and Maine Avenue, the lack of a cohesive connection between waterfront sites, and the absence of public activity around the area.⁷²⁹ Its proposal to remedy this situation revolved primarily around the construction of an International Center – complete with housing, community sites, and offices – in the area of the Tenth Street Overlook, Water Street, and Jefferson Junior High School in order to increase density and levels of activity

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 3-7.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 1-3.

⁷²⁸ Ibid., 2-3 - 2-4.

⁷²⁹ Federal City Council, Washington, D.C. *Report of the Waterfront Task Force of the Federal City Council* ([Washington, D.C.]: Waterfront Task Force, 22 February 1982), 2, 7-9.

in the area.⁷³⁰ In addition, it advocated incorporating Banneker Overlook into a new complex and constructing a bridge between the Overlook and the waterfront, minimizing the width of Water Street, redeveloping the Jefferson Junior High School site if and when it becomes available, and adding additional restaurants along the waterfront.⁷³¹

One year later, in 1983, the Federal City Council commissioned an external study of design concepts for the waterfront. The impetus for this study was to prepare for the impending arrival of the International Cultural and Trade Center, which many believed would bring new life to Southwest.⁷³² The issues raised in this study echoed those of the previous year's FCC report. In response, it offered several solutions. These included building a pedestrian bridge across the channel, moving and expanding the Fish Market to a location underneath the bridge, developing a public park on the former site of the Fish Market and Waterfront Park No. 1 to link the International Center to the waterfront, widening and reconfiguring the waterfront promenade, creating gateway parks at the water's edge, adding commercial development, narrowing Water Street, and creating a community, water-level pier at the southern end of the promenade.⁷³³

Later, in 1998, at the request of the Southwest Neighborhood Association upon the impending departure of the Environmental Protection Agency from its offices at Waterside Mall, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) published its own waterfront proposal. Like the AWI, the ULI recommendations similarly advocated adding restaurant and retail space along the waterfront, increasing the pedestrian nature of the area, reorganizing the piers in order to better cluster recreational and commercial use, and adding community boating facilities at the southern end. Although it recommended the addition of new housing throughout the neighborhood, it did not propose placing it along the waterfront specifically. In addition, the proposal envisioned a staircase from Banneker Overlook to the waterfront and a pedestrian bridge between the northern end of the waterfront and East Potomac Park.⁷³⁴

L'Enfant Promenade

Although the AWI is focused on the waterfront, it also encompasses virtually all other major initiatives going on in Southwest – essentially a waterfront neighborhood – as well. Thus, in coordination with the initiative, the District Department of Transportation, along with the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service, and the Washington Interdependence Council, recently completed an urban planning study of the L'Enfant Promenade site. Its purpose was to investigate rehabilitation options and ways to improve

⁷³⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁷³¹ Ibid., 12-14.

⁷³² Anderson Notter Finegold, et. al., i.

⁷³³ Ibid., iii – iv.

⁷³⁴ Urban Land Institute, Advisory Services Panel, *Southwest Washington, D.C.: A Strategy for Revitalizing Waterside Mall and the Waterfront* (Washington, D.C.: ULI – The Urban Land Institute, 1998), 16-17, 42-43.

connections with the waterfront and the rest of the Southwest. The study's five guiding principles suggest numerous possibilities for achieving those goals.⁷³⁵

First, the plan advocates improving the pedestrian experience of the promenade through the addition of greenery, such as trees, and infill development. Second, it seeks to realize the promenade's monumental potential for the city, possibly through the addition of monuments or memorials at the Overlook site and at the axial crossing of Maryland Avenue, as well as by eliminating the obstruction of the Forrestal Building. Third, it proposes improved connectivity by possibly bridging I-395, extending Maryland Avenue east, and introducing uses to the Federal building area that would stimulate evening activity. Fourth, the plan envisions the Overlook as a Southwest and Washington, D.C., gateway, potentially through the development of an activity center there, the integration of transportation at the site, and connection of the site with the waterfront. Finally, it seeks to achieve a more urban, rather than Modernist, scale through 'human scale' infill development and active street uses.⁷³⁶

Thus, the plans for L'Enfant Promenade attempt to revitalize the promenade and plaza complex, in part through realization of some of the original, but unaffected elements of the original plan. The elimination of the obstruction of the Forrestal Building, the incorporation of more cultural after-hours and weekend attractions, and the connection of the promenade with the waterfront, are just three such elements that are virtual repetitions of plans articulated during urban renewal days. This time, however, the plans are already taking more concrete shape. For example, Congress has already authorized the Washington Independence Council to build an African American monument or museum on the site. In addition, the Children's Museum, currently located elsewhere in the city, has committed as well to establish its new home in the complex.⁷³⁷ Finally, the momentum of the AWI will likely propel change as well.

Waterside Mall

Waterside Mall has been plagued by troubles ever since it started. It never lived up to the original plans to house about 100 shops, with residential towers flanking its sides, and the site was the subject of redevelopment discussions from before construction even completed. In May 1976, for example, local residents formed the coalition Save Our Mall to pressure the mayor to investigate and solve the mall's difficulties.⁷³⁸ In 1978, Metro announced that it would clean up its construction equipment on the site, Safeway announced expansion plans, and the developer announced plans to finish planned building construction, which had previously been under

⁷³⁵ "L'Enfant Promenade Urban Planning Study," *District Department of Transportation Home Page*, <http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view,a,1249,q,561648.asp>, accessed 27 July 2004.

⁷³⁶ Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.

⁷³⁷ Debbi Wilgoren and Dana Hedgpeth, "Children's Museum Moving," *Washington Post*, 18 May 2001, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A34539-2004May17?language=printer>, accessed 18 May 2004.

⁷³⁸ Walterene Swanston, "At Waterside Mall, Businesses Are Struggling," *Washington Post*, 30 December 1976, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

question. Despite these gains, however, the complex has never been a thriving community shopping center.⁷³⁹

The most fervent – and likely effectual – activities began once the EPA announced plans to vacate the office space at Waterside Mall. Following that stimulus, the SWNA requested that the Urban Land Institute (ULI) assemble an advisory panel to address possibilities for both the mall and the overall waterfront. Their recommendations significantly influenced Forest City Washington, Kaempfer Company, and Bresler and Reiner, Inc.’s current Waterfront (the trio’s new name for Waterside Mall) redevelopment plans.

Having surveyed current usage of Waterside Mall, ULI learned that several businesses were thriving at the time, although others were struggling (a Roy Rogers fast-food restaurant recently closed). The lack of customers was due to several factors, most of which have characterized the mall since it originally opened in the 1970s: an unwillingness to park in the underground garage, a lack of useful services for residents, and the complex’s rundown and unattractive appearance. Still, residents found the merchandise to be reasonably priced and of good quality, they appreciated the center’s convenience, and there were not many other local options available.⁷⁴⁰

In response to its findings, ULI reached several conclusions. First, it recommended “a plan that will reintroduce the traditional street grid to the neighborhood by reconnecting Fourth Street.”⁷⁴¹ The Institute argued that a new Main Street-oriented center would actually increase leasable space, encourage neighborhood-scale tenants, and improve both pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Second, ULI recommended reconfiguring the office tower for leasing by multiple tenants, rather than one single agency or firm. These tenants might include high-tech businesses or an assisted living facility, among others.⁷⁴²

In October 2001, D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams announced plans to redevelop Waterside Mall – in conjunction with developers Forest City Enterprises, Kaempfer Co., and Bresler and Reiner – by reopening Fourth Street to pedestrian and vehicular traffic and turning the mall structure into “smaller, more attractive components.”⁷⁴³ The project received significant support when, in March 2003, the D.C. Department of Transportation issued a transportation study of the site which concluded that, “because of improved levels of service, reduced delay and queue lengths, and reduced traffic on local residential streets, the Study Team recommends that 4th

⁷³⁹ William H. Jones, “Safeway to Expand Here,” *Washington Post*, 20 June 1978, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; William H. Jones, “Waterside Mall Impasse Broken,” *Washington Post*, 20 June 1978, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁷⁴⁰ Urban Land Institute, *Southwest Washington, D.C.*, 23.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁴³ Debbi Wilgoren, “District Plans to Redevelop Mall in SW,” *Washington Post*, 25 October 2001, ProQuest.

Street be connected between I and M Streets and that this connection be made available to vehicles.”⁷⁴⁴

The planned Waterfront adaptive reuse project will realize this infrastructural objective and create 2 million square feet of office space, 100,000 square feet of retail space, and 400,000 square feet of residential space, where today only 1,150,000 square feet of office and retail space exist. The developers intend for the tenants of this new space to include restaurants and other community- and business-oriented retailers.⁷⁴⁵ Most significantly, with the agreement by Fannie Mae to move to the now-vacant office space, the developers have already secured a major tenant for the project.⁷⁴⁶

South Capitol Street

The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative also includes proposals for improvement to South Capitol Street, the eastern border of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area and a major thoroughfare leading from the Southeast and Southwest quadrants to the city center.

In November 2003, the D.C. Department of Transportation published the *South Capitol Street Gateway and Improvement Study*, outlining potential proposals for improving the area. In establishing the context for why such improvement was necessary, the report reiterates many of the same points that were given when rationalizing the symbolic need for Southwest’s urban renewal half a century ago. Next to a photograph of the Capitol dome, obscured by elevated roadways, the authors of the report wrote:

Washington, D.C. represents the physical manifestation of America's democratic ideals. The Capitol, the White House, the Washington Monument, and the city's memorials connected by a tree-lined network of streets and parks present iconic images of the nation's political aspirations. These magnificent symbols are particularly powerful when perceived from a distance, as they dominate the skyline and the city surrounding them.

There are vistas in the nation’s capital that present a very different image. The current view up South Capitol Street shows the Capitol dome obscured by a tangle of freeway and railroad overpasses. The street itself is a ragged thoroughfare lined intermittently with gas stations, fast-food restaurants, and vacant lots. A few distressed trees along the corridor are the only hints of green along narrow sidewalks. The state of South Capitol

⁷⁴⁴ D.C. Department of Transportation, “Fourth Street Transportation Study,” <http://www.ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view,a,1249,q,561151.asp>, accessed 9 August 2004.

⁷⁴⁵ *Waterfront Web Site*, <http://waterfrontdc.com/project.htm>, accessed 9 August 2004.

⁷⁴⁶ Dana Hedgpeth, “Fannie to Lease on Waterfront,” *Washington Post*, 28 April 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A48142-2004Apr27.html>, accessed 26 May 2004.

Street eclipses the U.S. Capitol's significance as Washington's most prominent building and undercuts its symbolic importance to the nation.⁷⁴⁷

The redevelopment efforts at South Capitol Street seek to accomplish several goals. These include creating a grand and ceremonial gateway that connects the area physically and aesthetically with Washington's Monumental Core; developing a transportation system that encourages growth in retail, housing, and employment in the area; linking South Capitol Street to the waterfront; and, ensuring the street's ability to serve the nation's homeland and national security needs as an evacuation route.⁷⁴⁸

The major implications of the overall South Capitol Street initiatives for the Southwest portion of the site are that much of the vacant and underutilized properties west of South Capitol Street would likely be filled and or redeveloped with more functional, mixed use development. Moreover, pedestrian-oriented establishments might replace the automobile-oriented fast-food restaurants and gas stations that currently line the roadway, and more residential and community-oriented uses might replace warehouses and industrial facilities further inland. In addition, the South Capitol Street roadway may be widened to incorporate park space and/or wider walkways along its length. Finally, M Street might be rebranded to take on a more significant role as an east-west connector, perhaps incorporating a light-rail circulator between Waterside Mall and Southeast.⁷⁴⁹

VI. Successes and Failures

Impacts of Urban Renewal

Southwest's urban renewal has been the subject of numerous appraisals on various dimensions of the process – ranging from architectural style to administration and relocation procedures. While some herald the pioneering accomplishments of urban renewal in Southwest, particularly in light of limited experiences to date in that field, others lament the destruction of the previous poor, but vibrant, community. In reality, however, there have been both successes and failures along just about every one of the dimensions that the project can be assessed.

Architectural/Urban Design Impact

From an architectural perspective, the project achieved numerous accolades. In December 1965, for example, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) awarded the Southwest

⁷⁴⁷ District of Columbia. Department of Transportation, *The South Capitol Gateway and Corridor Improvement Study; Final Report* ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., 4 November 2003), <http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view,a,1247,q,560731.asp>, accessed 8 August 2004, 3.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁴⁹ U.S. NCPC, South Capitol Street Urban Design Study ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., January 2003), http://www.ncpc.gov/planning_init/s_capitol/s_capitol_st.html, accessed 9 August 2004; Urban Land Institute, *South Capitol Street Corridor, Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C.: ULI – the Urban Land Institute, 2004), 15, 28.

Urban Renewal Area the first Citation for Excellence in Community Architecture.⁷⁵⁰ Individual residential and community projects also garnered awards as well.

These awards were not purely accidental, as the RLA hired nationally renowned architects for many of the plans and projects and employed several additional tactics in order to actively pursue high quality architectural design. Three specific tactics the RLA cited include: developing site plans for portions of the area, with the aim of visualizing building massing, separations, and the flow of air and light; selling or leasing particular building sites through design competitions (which only occurred later in the process); and engaging an Architectural Advisory Panel to assist architects and developers in coordinating materials, scale, and building orientation between projects.⁷⁵¹ In terms of architectural landscaping, the RLA also noted that it tried to save as many of the old trees as possible and planned to plant many new ones as well.⁷⁵²

Federal Urban Renewal Commissioner William Slayton best expressed the urban design philosophy in Southwest when he stated in a speech, “We ought not to continue to build the same thing we have been building over and over again. We ought to try some new ideas, some new relationships between buildings, some other types of units – all sorts of different ideas for urban living.”⁷⁵³ The Southwest urban renewal area was certainly an extreme example of one such trial.

Individuals have also offered criticism of the individual components of the project. Where appropriate in this document, such critiques have been included alongside specific building and site descriptions. In addition, however, more general appraisals were also made. Some of these appraisals came from Wolf von Eckardt, who critiqued the renewal of Southwest Washington, D.C., in numerous columns in the *Washington Post*, as well as in a chapter in his book, *A Place to Live*. Von Eckardt lauded several features of the project, including the “remarkably handsome new housing projects” that were “honestly modern without touting their modernity to the detriment of popular appeal” and the “happy mixture of low town houses and tall apartment buildings,” in contrast to what previous designers might have turned into “vast, useless, and dull space.”⁷⁵⁴

At the same time, however, von Eckardt noted numerous architectural failings as well. He called the Southwest’s haphazard mixture of architectural styles “incoherent,” and he particularly criticized the churches and schools as exhibiting architecture ranging “from the merely undistinguished to the outright bad.” He also noted the failure of planning to provide the facilities and structure necessary to make Southwest either part of the city or a self-contained neighborhood of its own. Despite all of its successes, then, von Eckardt lamented the fact that “with a little more insight and political daring, [Southwest] might so easily have become a

⁷⁵⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1966, 3.

⁷⁵¹ D.C. RLA, “The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area.”

⁷⁵² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 26.

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁴ Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 301-306.

sophisticated new district to help make Washington the cosmopolitan world capital it deserves to be.”⁷⁵⁵

Based on the number of redevelopment projects currently planned for Southwest, today’s planners and developers would seem to agree with some of these last of von Eckardt’s criticisms. The city and private developers are planning redevelopment for all of the major commercial areas designed under Zeckendorf’s plan for Project Area C – including L’Enfant Plaza, Waterside Mall, and the waterfront. As if in direct response to the sentiments of von Eckardt, these projects seek to address the neighborhood’s disconnection from the rest of the city, as well as the lack of basic community services for those who live there. The need to redesign these intended monumental sites only decades after their costly completion seems to confirm the inadequacy of their execution, if not their design. It should be noted, however, that most of the plans were not executed as envisioned (particularly at L’Enfant Plaza), making it impossible to determine whether or not the architects’ full-scale plans could have yielded better results.

Although Von Eckardt does not specifically mention the second commercial areas, these too could be added to his list of “undistinguished” structures. Already, much of the property north of the expressway and south of the railroad tracks has been significantly altered – to the extent that it is almost as difficult to discover urban renewal era development in that tract as it is to find the old southwest in the midst of urban renewal residential development. In the second major second commercial area – the property west of South Capitol Street and east of Delaware Avenue – redevelopment has been less significant, but the structures remaining there look underutilized and dilapidated. Thus, the South Capitol Street redevelopment initiatives target revitalization of this area as well.

The residential complexes, then, seem to be some of the only developments to continue to function well today. Although several building owners have diminished living conditions in individual housing complexes, on the whole, these buildings remain popular and functional because of the very attributes that supported their development during urban renewal – their locational desirability (with easy access to the central city and waterfront) and their well-designed spaces. These structures were the subject of some of the most creative of urban renewal era design. Most importantly, however, unlike the equally carefully designed commercial sites, economic cost-cutting and bureaucratic alterations generally did not impede these structures from realizing their architects’ grand visions.

Economic Impact

The economic costs of this dramatic redevelopment project were very high, with the total endeavor costing more than half of a billion dollars. This expenditure was only feasible, however, given two factors – the support of the Federal government, and the partnership with the private sector.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., 304-306.

According to urban renewal legislation, the Federal government was to provide two dollars for every one spent by the local municipality. Moreover, the local government's payments could be made with in-kind grants, rather than cash. Examples of such grants in-kind in the Southwest included improvements in and construction of schools, fire stations, a police precinct, highways, water mains, and sewers.⁷⁵⁶ The in-kind grants were so substantial that, by mid-1958, only one small cash payment had been necessary in Southwest.⁷⁵⁷

The other key economic enabler of urban renewal was the significant role of the private sector. The public-private partnership was so substantial that the total costs were split almost fifty-fifty between the two groups. By mid-1972, at the tale end of Southwest's urban renewal, approximately \$41 million in redevelopment projects were still underway and projects worth roughly \$495 million had already been completed. Of the completed construction, \$230 million had come from the government, and private sponsors had provided the remaining \$265 million.⁷⁵⁸

Thus, urban renewal resulted in significant economic drain. Consistent with the economic impetus for renewal, however, these costs were an investment in significant long-term economic gains in increased taxes. For example, by 1971, taxes from the area were almost seven times as high as their \$592,016 intake level of 1953,⁷⁵⁹ and levels only continued to grow from there as further construction was completed. One of the key drivers of increased taxes was the project's ability to lure former suburban residents back to the city. As Von Eckardt has noted, the endeavor succeeded in doing just that,⁷⁶⁰ finding homes for high-priced residential communities on the site of a former slum.

Social Impact

While the economic burdens were carried by a variety of parties – most of whom received substantial return on their investment – the area's poor former residents disproportionately bore the social impacts of urban renewal. When British planner Percy Johnson-Marshall offered his perspective on the project in 1966, he offered three major lessons; the first of these concerned relocation. He noted most emphatically that former residents had not all been justly served by relocation, and they must be.⁷⁶¹ Robert Howes also echoed Johnson-Marshall's criticism in his separate study of the people who had been left behind during relocation.

⁷⁵⁶ District of Columbia Board of Commissioners, *State of the Nation's Capital: A Report to the Congress from The Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia* ([Washington, D.C.], n.p., 1959), Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, 7-7.

⁷⁵⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 14.

⁷⁵⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 14.

⁷⁵⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 27; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, 20.

⁷⁶⁰ Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 301-306; Wolf von Eckardt, "New Southwest a Bundle of Boons," *Washington Post*, 30 October 1962.

⁷⁶¹ Percy Johnson-Marshall, "The Shapes of the New Southwest," *Architectural Forum* 125 (July - August 1966), 66.

Even if all of the Southwest's former residents had been adequately rehoused (and it should be noted that the vast majority of residents who took advantage of relocation services most definitely did receive adequate rehousing), however, the executioners of Southwest's urban renewal would not have achieved complete success from a social perspective. Regardless of the poor physical conditions of the old Southwest, there is little disagreement that the area had a vibrant and close-knit community. When the residents were wrenched out of their neighborhood and scattered in disparate homes all around the District, that community largely disappeared. As Daniel Thursz has noted, the emotional and social impacts of this wrenching were significant, leading him to recommend that relocation be avoided as much as possible in all future urban renewal efforts. What makes this story all the worse, however, is that the residents were originally told that they would be able to return to Southwest; by and large, that promise was not fulfilled.

The flip side of this story of broken community is the equally strong sense of community that has developed in the new Southwest. Von Eckardt called this the "encouraging community spirit" that renewal and the return of the middle class brought to the area.⁷⁶² This sense of community is evident in the activism of many of the Southwest's residents, in the annual festivals that are held there, and just the friendly hellos of passersby on the street. More formally, it is also evident in the community's institutions. One of the major such institutions that formed in this new neighborhood was the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA). Formed in spring 1963, the assembly replaced the previously racially divided neighborhood organizations in order to join residents in a single grass-roots citizens' group. Since its founding, the SWNA continues to play an active role in representing the voice of the Southwest community.⁷⁶³

While the SWNA seeks to unite all of Southwest's residents – from public housing to luxury high rises – these disparate groups have never, and still do not, live together in perfect harmony. Thus, the extreme socioeconomic range of this small geographic area seems to be another of the social errors committed in the planning of Southwest's urban renewal. This error continues to plague the area today as housing developments debate whether to fence themselves off in order to prevent vandalism, or to continue to attempt to create an open community where citizens of all socioeconomic levels can coexist side-by-side. As in the case of the world-class community centers planned for Southwest, the idealism under which planners and government officials operated in locating the extreme haves and the extreme have-nots side by side in this tiny District quadrant did not play out as neatly in practice as it sounded in design.

What Will Be Lost

Just as twenty-first century redevelopment offers the opportunity to correct some of the failings of Southwest's urban renewal, it also brings with it the risk of destroying the physical fabric and history of much that was built during the momentous period of the late 1950s through

⁷⁶² Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 301-306.

⁷⁶³ SCC and SWNA, 22.

early 1970s. Even with those impending potential losses, however, the scale of urban renewal development was such that the area will still continue to serve as a living museum of Modernism in Washington, D.C., even when the latest construction equipment is silenced. Moreover, as wholesale demolition is no longer the policy of urban redevelopment, it is safe to assume that a vast portion of the development and sense of the area will remain.

In light of the pending plans – both private and public – this document closes with a consolidated list of the buildings and sites that currently appear as though they may potentially be eliminated, changed, or added in the former Southwest Urban Renewal Area in the near future. While change marks the end of one planning era, this redevelopment is ultimately consistent with the history of the area, which, perhaps more than any other area in Washington, D.C., has been characterized by a lengthy and continuous cycle of destruction and rebuilding during the Southwest's entire lifetime.

Initiatives / Sites	Eliminate	Change	Add
Waterfront (SW Waterfront Plan component of Anacostia Waterfront Initiative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront promenade • Waterfront parks • St. Augustine's Church • Locations of marinas and piers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hi-rise mixed use structures along waterfront, including 750 units of housing • Two plazas • Museum / Memorial
Waterside Mall / Fourth Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Center parks • Town Center churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut Waterside Mall in two • Reopen Fourth Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller scale, mixed-use structures on Fourth Street • New office buildings?
L'Enfant Promenade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forrestal Building obstruction (cut in two) • Banneker Overlook Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrianize • Connect Maryland Avenue • Connect Overlook to waterfront 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air rights development over I-395 • Memorials • Museum (Children's, African American) • ML Baseball stadium • Visitor/Parking center
South Capitol Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underutilized facilities between South Capitol Street and Delaware Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn M Street into a major thoroughway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light rail along M Street • Park and public space, potentially housing • Monument or memorial
Potomac Place (Capitol Park)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban park / open space • Pavilion • Reflecting pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate mural to H Street corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new high-rises (the Residences at Potomac Place)
Friendship Baptist Church (former)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert to office space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condominiums

VII. Sources of Information

Architectural Drawings:

Given the large scale of the project, no architectural drawings for the individual buildings have been used. However, many drawings do exist. Some are held at the Library of Congress, and others are in archives related to the specific architects. The urban renewal plans included many land use and other planning drawings. These have been heavily used in preparing this report. As these are part of the overall plan, rather than separate individual drawings, they have been included in the primary source information.

Early Views:

The *Joseph Owen Curtis Photograph Collection, 1910-1989*, contained in the archives of the Washingtoniana Division of the Martin Luther King branch of the D.C. Public Library, includes many photographs of Southwest before, during, and after urban renewal. These have been surveyed in brief, but none have been included in this report.

Interviews:

Francesca Ammon, Group interview with Jim Banks (former relocation officer and former post-renewal resident of Southwest), Margaret Feldman (current River Park resident and former president of the SWNA), Fred Jordan (Former board member of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and current River Park resident), Ron McBee (current Capitol Park resident), Keith Melder (historian), and Richard Westbrook (Southwest photographer, former Southwest ANC representative, current Town Square resident), River Park, 1301 Delaware Avenue SW, Washington, D.C., 24 June 2004.

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The bibliography identifies the appropriate repository for many of the primary and secondary sources. The following is a key to the abbreviations:

AIA = Library of the American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C.
City Museum = Kiplinger Research Library at the City Museum, Washington, D.C.
D.C. HPO = D.C. Historic Preservation Office, Washington, D.C.
LC = Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
MLK = Martin Luther King Memorial Library, Washington, D.C.
SW = Southwest Branch Library, Washington, D.C.

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Supplemental Material

Summary

Summary of New Buildings and Sites of Southwest's Urban Renewal

Context

Redevelopment Survey and Project Areas in Relation to Principal Problem Areas (1952)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Project Area B*, Plate 6.

District of Columbia, Location of Southwest Area (1952)

Source: Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Plate 1.

Conditions in the Old Southwest

Existing Land Use (1950)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Project Area B*, Plate 7.

Conditions of Dwellings (1950)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Project Area C*, Plate 10.

Assessed values of Land and Improvements (1950)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . .Project Area B*, Plate 17.

Quality of Housing (1952)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . .Project Area B*, Plate 15.

Existing Community Facilities (1956)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . .Project Area C*, Plate 13.

Redevelopment Proposals

Peets Proposal: Redevelopment Plan for the Southwest Survey Area: Land Use Plan (1952)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . .Project Area C*, Plate 1.

Justement-Smith Plan: Site Plan Illustrating an Application of the survey Area Plan of the Southwest Redevelopment Area (1952)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . .Project Area B*, Plate 18.

Goodwillie War Housing Proposal: Proposed Redevelopment in Southwest Washington (1942)

Source: Goodwillie.

Project Areas

Land Use Plan for Redevelopment of Project Area B (1959 Update to 1952 Plan)

Source: U.S. NCPC, "Specifications," *Redevelopment Plan for Southwest Redevelopment Project Area B* (Washington, D.C.: n.p., May 1959), Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers.

Land Use Plan for Project Area C (1956)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . .Project Area C*, Plate 3.

Land Use Plan, Southwest Urban Renewal Project Area C-1 (1956)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . .Project Area C*, Plate 7.

Entire Project Area Land Use Plans

Land Use Plan for Southwest Urban Renewal Area (1956)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . .Project Area C*, Plate 2.

Southwest Project Areas (1957)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1957, 5.

Proposed Zeckendorf Plan (1959)

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Southwest Urban Renewal Area Boundaries and Major Roadways (1968)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 4.

Southwest Development Maps

Guide to the New Southwest (1962)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 16-17.

The New Southwest (1963)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 16-17.

The New Southwest (1969)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 20-21.

The New Southwest (1970)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 20-21.

Summary of New Buildings and Sites of Southwest's Urban Renewal

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Architect</u>	<u>Completed</u>
Residential			
Capitol Park			
Potomac Place (Capitol Park Apartments)	800 Fourth St.	Satterlee & Smith	1959
Capitol Park Towers	301 G St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1962
Capitol Park Twin Towers	101 and 103 G St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1963
Capitol Park Plaza	201 Eye St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1965
Capitol Park II (townhouses)	Third St., between G and I streets	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1960-61
Capitol Park IV (townhouses)	741 Delaware Ave.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1963?
Town Center Plaza		I.M. Pei & Partners	
Town Center Plaza East	1001 - 1101 Third St.	I.M. Pei & Partners	1961
Marina View Towers (T.C.P. West)	1000 - 1100 Sixth St.	I.M. Pei & Partners	1962
River Park	1301 Delaware Ave.	Charles M. Goodman Architects	1963
Tiber Island	429 N St.	Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon	1965
Carrollsbury Square	1250 Fourth St.	Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon	1965
Harbour Square	500 N St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1966
Chalk House West (former name)		Lapidus, Harle & Liebman	1966
Riverside (J. Finley House)	1425 Fourth St.		
Edgewater	410 O St.		
1401-1415 Fourth St.	1401-1415 Fourth St.		
Town Square	700 Seventh St. (tower) 610 H St. (townhouses)	Cohen-Haft Associates Macomber and Peter	1967 1965+
Waterside Towers (Trilon Plaza)	907 Sixth St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1970
Channel Square	325 P St.	Harry Weese & Associates	1968-69
St. James Mutual Homes (rehabilitated)	210 O St.	Albert I. Cassell (orig. architect)	1967

Location

Architect

Completed

Community

<u>Schools</u>			
Amidon Elementary School	401 Eye St.	Lublin, McGaughy and Assoc.	1960
Hawthorne School/SEU	501 Eye St.	Charles M. Goodman Associates	1964
<u>Churches</u>			
St. Dominic's R.C. Church Priory	630 E St.	Thomas H. Locraft and Associates	1962
Christ Methodist Church	900 Fourth St.	A. Hensel Fink	1963
Bethel Pentecostal Tabernacle	60 Eye St.	Eimer Cappelman	1963
St. Matthews Lutheran Church	222 M St.	Milton Prassas	1964
Westminster United Presbyterian Church	400 Eye St.	Harry E. Wagoner	1965
Friendship Baptist Church (new)	900 Delaware Ave.	Vaughn, Ferguson and Woodson	1965
St. Augustine's Episcopal Church	600 M St.		1965-66
Riverside Baptist Church	680 Eye St.	Ward and Hall	1968
Southwest Public Library	900 Wesley Place	Clas & Riggs	1965
<u>Parks and Recreation Areas</u>			
Randall Recreation Center	S. Capitol and Eye streets		
Town Center Parks	Sixth and Eye streets Fourth and Eye streets Third and Eye streets	Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd	1972
Waterside Parks	Waterfront	Sasaki, Dawson & DeMay	1972
Lansburgh Neighborhood Park	Delaware Avenue, L Street		
Arena Stage/Kreeger Theater	1101 Sixth St.	Harry Weese & Associates	1961/1970

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Architect</u>	<u>Completed</u>
Commercial			
Tenth St. Mall		I.M. Pei and Partners (plan)	1960-73
Banneker Overlook		Dan Urban Kiley	1968?
L'Enfant Plaza		I.M. Pei and Partners (plan)	1960-73
Astral Building (north)	955 L'Enfant Plaza	Araldo A. Cossutta (I.M. Pei & Ptn)	1968
Comsat Building (south)	950 L'Enfant Plaza	Araldo A. Cossutta (I.M. Pei & Ptn)	1968
Loew's L'Enfant Plaza Hotel	470-490 L'Enfant Plaza	Vlastimil Koubek	1973
L'Enfant Plaza West (USPS)	475 L'Enfant Plaza	Vlastimil Koubek	1971
Town Center	401 M St.	I.M. Pei & Partners	1961
Waterside Mall		Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Associates	1972
Waterfront			
Zanzibar on the Waterfront	700 Water St.		early 1970s
Hogate's/H ₂ O	800 Water St.		1972
Phillips Flagship	900 Water St.		1972
Gangplank Marina	600 Water St.		ca. 1973
Channel Inn Hotel	650 Water St.		1973
Capital Yacht Club	1000 Water St.		1973
North of Expressway, South of Railroad			
Southwest Market Center (gone)	E St., between Fourth and Second streets	Edmund W. Dreyfus and Associates	1959
American Road Builders Building	525 School St.	Mills, Petticord & Mills	1965
Coffey-Smith Associates Building / Child and Family Services Bureau	400 Sixth St.		1960s
Smith-Corona Marchant, Inc. Office Bldg. (gone)		Wendell B. Hallett	1960s
Capital Film Laboratories (gone)	470 E St.	Wendell B. Hallett	1960s

Otis Elevator Building (gone)	465 School St		1960s
	<u>Location</u>	<u>Architect</u>	<u>Completed</u>

Commercial (continued)

West of South Capitol Street			
Bernstein Neighborhood Center / Virginia Williams Family Resource Center	25 M St.		1965
Best Western Capitol Skyline Hotel	10 Eye St.	Lapidus, Harle & Liebman	1962-63
Health & Welfare Council Building / United Way of the National Capital Area	95 M St.		
West of Tenth Street			
500 Twelfth St. Associates Building (gone)	500 Twelfth St.		1967-68

Government

Federal Office Building (FOB) No. 6 (NASA and HEW, now Department of Education)	400 Maryland Ave.	Chatelaine, Gauger & Nolen Faulkner, Kinsbury & Stenhouse	1961
FOB No. 10a (FAA)	800 Independence Ave.	Holabird and Root Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen	1963
FOB No. 10b (NASA, now FAA)	600 Independence Ave.	Holabird and Root Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen	ca. 1963
FOB No. 8 (FDA)	200 C St.	Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson	1965
Reporters Building (private)	300 Seventh St.	Vosbeck, Ward and Associates	ca. 1965
Robert C. Weaver Federal Building (HUD)	451 Seventh St.	Marcel Breuer	1968
FOB No. 5/James Forrestal Building (DOE)	1000 Independence Ave.	Curtis & Davis	1969
David Nassif Building (private) (U.S. Dept. of Transportation Building)	400 Seventh St.	Edward Durrell Stone	1969
Hubert H. Humphrey Building (HHS)	200 Independence Avenue	Marcel Breuer, Herbert Beckhard	1976